

DECEMBER LONDON SHOW IN-DEPTH REPORT

TOY SOLDIER **COLLECTOR**

February/March 2016 | Issue 68

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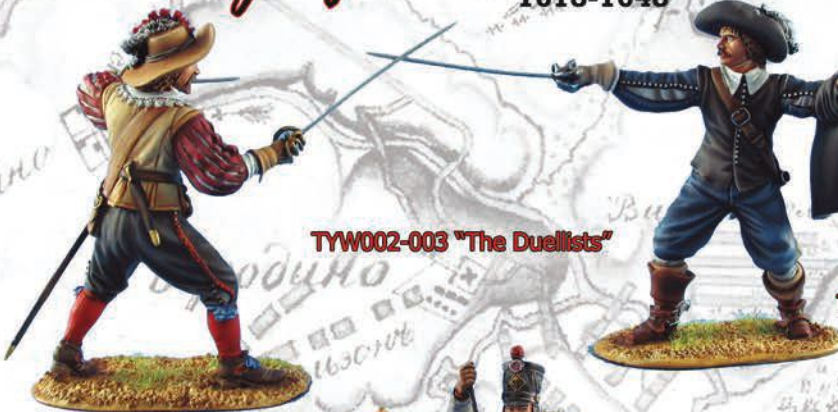
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Teutonic
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Thirty Years War 1618-1648



TYW002-003 "The Duelists"



TYW001 A/B/C The Three Musketeers

The RETREAT from RUSSIA



**VEH017 PzKpfw IV Ausf F2
with Long Barrel 75mm and
Winterketten -
16th Panzer Division**



NAP0510-NAP0513 Retreat from Russia French and Sledge

TOY SOLDIER COLLECTOR

Editor:

Mark Avery

Chairman:

Regis Auckland
(reg@regallitho.co.uk)

Sales & Marketing Director:

Tom Foxon
(tom@regallitho.co.uk
and tfoxon@skyc.com)
Tel: 07540 153368

Contributors: Mike Blake, Martin Ainscough, Paul Stocker, George Phillips, Keith Nairn-Munro, Chris Bartlett, AJ Mergenthaler and Dr Martin Kerby

Sub Editor:

Emma Whittaker

Editorial Assistant:

Gemma Avery

Design:

Andy Whittaker

Printing:

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Welcome

So the December show came and went (see the full report later in this issue) as did Christmas and New Year, and here we are at the start of 2016! So what does this new year herald?

For any of you reading this who are based in the very North of our country, or just over the border in Scotland, then hopefully some much needed improvement in the weather. The scenes over the Christmas holidays of all the villages and towns that were hit by the storms and horrific flooding really were terrible. I hope not one of you was affected, but given our wide readership these days, I am guessing the odds are against us and at least a few of you may have been caught up in the misery. If you were affected then I can only hope that by the time you're reading this the worst is well behind you, that things are getting back to normality and that, of course, your miniature troops also survived unscathed.

Christmas in the Avery house revolved around our kids as they're at the perfect age for all the fun the festive season brings, my son in particular (aged six) was 'wide eyed' the whole time and funnily enough, one of his presents got me thinking again about how to get kids more interested in our hobby. My son had asked for a new Xbox game from Santa, a game called Skylanders, which not only involves playing on the screen, but also, to progress in the game, you need to buy additional characters. These 'characters' cost around £15 each and are basically plastic figures which have a microchip in them so they can interact with the games console and become part of the game. Now I know it would involve some serious investment, but as I sat there watching him playing this game, I realised that a military version of this, aimed at possibly a slightly older age group (teenagers), would probably be very popular and it would combine the preferred toy of the modern age, the console, with figure collecting (either metal or plastic as they thing would be the combination of the microchip) of the past. Anyway food for thought for any of the 'big boys' within our hobby reading this!

As for this issue, there's plenty to read including our interview with Anne Randall of Asset Miniatures, a feature on the early days of the W. Britain company as well as a memorial piece on a man without whom the UK hobby wouldn't be where it is today, Mr Alan Caton. As always, enjoy the issue. See you all back here in another couple of months.

All the best
Mark Avery
Editor

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Noticeboard

The **latest news** from around the global toy soldier hobby

Email any hobby related news to the Editor at tsceditor@darkmedialtd.com

or alternatively write in to: Guideline Publications Unit 3 Enigma Building, Bilton Road, Denbigh East, Bletchley, Buckinghamshire, MK1 1HW.

Glebe Miniatures

Glebe is a company that rarely gets a mention, simply because owner, Peter Turner, is truly a 'one man band' and as such keeps very busy without too much promotion. I caught up with Peter over the Christmas holidays and he let me know that he has been reissuing/remaking his Balkan Wars/Russo-Japanese War 1904/05 (and some of his other established ranges) into boxed sets of six or eight figures (with or without Flags or

Mounted Officers). For those of you that don't know, Peter's Glebe range is mostly based on recast solid old Britains figures which are converted by suitable Head changes/addition of packs and other equipment/plus appropriate or converted arms. All the figures are finished in the traditional gloss paint style (with or without moustaches) in marching or action poses. For further information, see Peter's ad elsewhere in this issue or send him a large SAE and he'll send you back his current lists.

CONTACT

Glebe Miniatures
Retreat House
Dorchester Road
Broadway
Weymouth
Dorset
DT3 5LN
Tel: 01305 815300



Examples of Glebe Miniatures available figures



Birmingham show success

The Birmingham Central Toy Soldier Show, supported by the W. Britain Collectors Club, took place at Edgbaston Cricket Centre on October 11, 2015, the second year at this new venue. It is pleasing to report that the number of visitors was up on last year. The usual mix of metal and plastic was represented by new and familiar brands including King & Country, Grey Goose Collectables and Steve Weston's usual impressive plastics selection. New exhibitors came from as far afield as Spain in the case of Alymer. Others attending for the first time included Louise Handley of Loggerheads Military Studio, John Gittins of JG Miniatures and also Marlborough/Sarum Soldiers.

Also in attendance were Katie Hines from W. Britain and Carl Robinson (representing this magazine) whose joint support Patrick Adams, organiser of the show, helped make the event possible. Make sure you put Sunday October 23 2016 in your diary as that's the date of this year's show (one week later than usual to avoid the Birmingham Half Marathon).

Maison Militaire sold

It was quite a shock to learn from Ken Jackson at the December show that he had sold his Maison Militaire retail business. Ken founded MM way back in 1982 but has now sold the business, including all stock as I understand it, to Robin Kelly who is in the process of relocating MM from its original base in Yorkshire to near his home in Kent. TSC will bring you further news on this change as we get the details from Robin. The good news is although Ken has sold MM he will continue to be involved in the hobby and will now be focusing his efforts on his own ranges of figures Heritage and Trophy, so watch this space!

Ready 4 Action

Bruce Murray, owner of R4A, got in touch after seeing the article in issue 66 on refurbishing old diecast vehicles. It appears Bruce is rather a 'dab hand' at this as you'll see from the photo, where he has turned an old Britains Daimler Scout car (the same as the one used in the article) into an 8th Army vehicle.



Britains collectors enjoy seasonal gathering

Devotees of the W.Britain brand enjoyed their annual Collectors Club gathering last December in a brand new Central London venue. Members gathered at the headquarters of the London Scottish Regiment in Horseferry Road, SW1 to meet fellow collectors, enjoy a seasonal tittle or two and hear the latest news from Ken Osen, General Manager and Creative Director for W.Britain.

The evening was hosted in the drill hall, which featured all the usual trappings of a regimental headquarters: paintings, regimental colours and memorial installations to remember fallen comrades. The regimental museum is hosted in two balconies above the drill hall and includes uniforms, personal equipment, small arms, medals, paintings and other memorabilia.

After some drinks and a nice selection of canapés, members were treated to a short talk and tour of the

museum by the regimental curator.

There is always an educational dimension to the Collectors Club evenings and in 2015, Britains rustled up something slightly different.

To mark the launch of a new range of Viking figures, two enactors put on a display of Dark Ages combat in the form of a Holmganger -- a duel between two Vikings to settle a matter of honour.

In their respective Viking personas of Ingver Silver-tongue and Haesten Sword Dancer, Mike Everest and Greg Jones laid into each other with swords, spears and long handled axes, and the action was fast and furious. Some club members looked genuinely stunned at the ferocity of the duel and in my view, it was only skill and careful choreography that prevented an eye or finger being lost.

Craig Appleton offered a more conventional historical presentation alongside Ian

Church, who was dressed in the uniform of an 1815 British infantryman and packing a replica Brown Bess Musket. Ian demonstrated the firing cycle of the musket and Craig described how British red coats had engaged Napoleon's Old Guard at Waterloo. It was a truly fascinating talk which had more than one audience member swelling with nationalistic pride!

The evening ended with Ken Osen offering some insights into the painstaking research that is undertaken to ensure that W.Britain figures are as historically accurate as possible.

Military history is clearly Ken's life's passion and through his involvement with W.Britain, he is able to share that passion with thousands of other enthusiasts across the globe.

A great evening and it promises to be another exciting year for W.Britain in 2016.

Text by George Phillips

Plastics news

by Mike Blake

Paragon Scenics

Plains Indians with exchangeable hands/ weapons and Alamo Mexican Regulars are all promised from Paragon. There are some photos on their website in the Coming Attractions section at: http://paragon-scenics.com/miniatures/Coming_Attractions.html, so take a look.

Also, there are photos of their playsets and the great looking buildings included in them. The fort has separate Headquarters, Commanding Officer's Quarters, two Adobe Barracks, Stone Storehouse, Blockhouse, Gate House with Working Gate, and Stockade sections, making multiple configurations possible. Looks stunning, see it at: http://paragon-scenics.com/miniatures/FORT_APACHE.html.

Publius

I have not seen the new Russian maker Publius set of 1:32 scale plastic Japanese Samurai Warriors, but they look promising. The set contains six figures in six action poses in cherry colour plastic. They are "extremely detailed and very well sculpted. True 1:32 scale. Looking good with other famous brands such as Armies in Plastic, Dulcop, X-Force and others," according to the advert. Photos at: <http://www.treefrogtreasures.com/forum/showthread.php?56515-Pvblivs-Samoura%C3%AF> and available to buy at: <http://www.ebay.com/itm/15190636049?ssPageName=STRK:MESELX:IT&trksid=p3984.m1555.12649>.

Obituary

Lt. Col. E. Joe Shimek (Ret.) of Potsdamer Zinnsoldaten (PZ) fame sadly passed away on October 1, 2015. A person of great wit, sharp humour and intelligence, this bagpipe playing man was a proud 1957 graduate of West Point Military Academy. His fascination with casting began with an A.C. Gilbert casting set at age eight, having previously begun playing with and collecting military figures as a younger boy. During his military service in the Cold War, one of his assignments was that of US Army/Soviet Forces liaison in Potsdam (hence the future name of his firm). While in Germany, he developed his encyclopedic knowledge of many manufacturers in all formats of flats, semi-rounds and rounds. Some of the manufacturers included Heyde, Spenkuch, Krause,

Bischoff, Haffner and more.

PZ was founded on the base of Heyde's catalog offerings of Size 2, but its production in a labeled box began with PZ-1 Askaris in 54mm which looked on Britains for inspiration. PZ was obviously not limited to Heyde's Size 2. Joe drew on multiple manufacturers including their various parts as well as those of his own creation. At times Joe was assisted by his late dear friend Neal Crowley along with PZ's out of house painting staff if he did not paint it himself.

Joe and PZ left a delightful legacy that makes collecting a joy. So Herr Oberst mein Freund, our corner of the world is diminished by your absence. Danke viemals, Hochachtungsvoll, Servus und Prost!

Written by Joe's good friend Michael Henry

Alan Caton

– A tribute

It is with great sadness that we have to report the passing of world renowned master sculptor Alan Caton in the early hours of the morning of Wednesday November 18 2015

Alan Caton was a true legend of the hobby in every sense of the word. There is no more fitting tribute to Alan than to say that, if he had not gone into the toy soldier manufacturing business some 50 odd years ago, then the modern toy soldier collecting scene as we know it to today would be a poorer place and definitely very different.

Alan's client list during his time in the hobby reads like a who's who of the toy soldier making world. It would probably be easier to list the manufacturers that he has not worked for during the last 50 plus years rather than listing those he has!

Alan first started out at Tradition which, at that time, was known as Norman Newton Limited when he left the Royal Air Force. He started as a painter and during the following years went on to the workshop where he learnt the art of mould making, casting and animation. While looking after the military antique shop at 44 Dover Street, he assisted in the production of the magazine, 'Tradition'. After 17 years, Alan left Tradition and went into partnership with Derek Cross to form All the Queen's Men, producing a range of 80mm figures of the British Army. Seven years later, he branched out with his own 'Squadron' range of 54 mm figures of the British Army combined with an 80mm range of figures depicting worldwide subject matter. He eventually sold these to Tradition when the range got too large to handle without major expansion plans.

It was at this time that he turned his attention to freelance master making, making master figures for numerous companies that have included most of the major manufacturers of toy soldiers and model figures, not just in the United Kingdom, but worldwide. Not to mention the special commissions for sets from such organisations as the RAOC and the Dutch Army Museum which, when completed, were destined for a royal home. Such sets had, over the years, also been presented to Queen Elizabeth II and the Prince of Wales among others.

Many of the major toy soldier making companies enlisted Alan's undoubted modelling skills and extensive military knowledge at some point and commissioned master figures from him.

Here, a few of his friends from within our hobby share their thoughts on a great man:

Nik Biberovic of Alexanders Toy Soldiers:

"Many thanks to Mr Alan S Caton, master sculptor, without whose fine work and inspiration ATS would not have been possible. Alan was always happy to research for me. He was meticulous in his detail and accuracy. He did not care much for watching sport but he did confess to liking formula one racing."

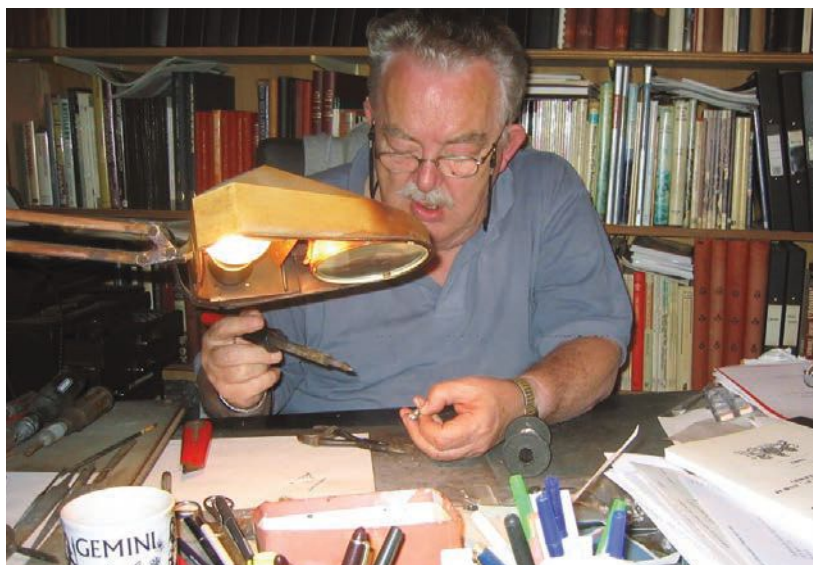
Brian Harrison of Yeomanry Miniatures:

"Alan was not only the sculptor of all Yeomanry Miniatures figures, but he was also my friend and without his skill, expertise and friendship, Yeomanry Miniatures would never have started and continued for so long. Now that he's gone I am, at present, unable to plan more than a few days ahead as there is now a hole in my world. It was only a month ago that I sent him pictures I had taken of the Spitfires, Hurricanes and the Blenheim as they flew along the coast to mark the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain. I miss him already."

Anne Randall of Asset Miniatures:

"Where to start? We have known Alan for almost 25 years, going back to when he sold Squadron to Tradition and started on his own with a Gurkha figure for Lancer and some Guards for us. Without Alan, we would not have Asset and I am sure that is true for other modellers - they would not have their ranges either. He was always full of enthusiasm for whatever figures or ranges were under development and usually came up with further ideas which he would then exploit. We would tell him the basics and leave the rest to him. He never criticised our work but was always full of encouragement. He might not have agreed with it, but never said so! He was a wealth of information; any query, however small, would be met with an almost instant answer with the help of his library. In fact, he had forgotten more than the whole of the modelling fraternity has ever known.

Help with whatever aspect of the hobby was never in short supply. When we took delivery of our mould vulcaniser, he came to help set it up. The mould pan was too large so he took it away back to its makers in West Yorkshire to get it rectified. We



Alan Caton as he will be best remembered by most, busily sculpting a new figure at his work bench

didn't ask - he just offered. That was a journey from Leicester to Harrow and then up to West Yorks.

I know there are other master sculptors on the scene but I am sure none like Alan. He had the whole hobby in his grasp. Whatever words are written about him will not do him full justice. An impossible task, but we can only try".

Mike Norris of Little Legion:

"Sad news indeed. I was speaking to Alan on the phone not long ago so a heck of a shock. When we first started out, Alan was always full of ideas for figures and always on hand to help. It's hard to think of toy soldiers without Alan".

The Turners Mark, Paul and John, of Tommy Atkins Ltd and Fusilier Miniatures:

"It was a massive blow to the British model soldier industry. Alan is irreplaceable for his knowledge and skill. On a more personal note, we will remember him for his very wry, dry sense of humour - what you saw with Alan is what you got! He will be missed by us and, I'm sure, very many other toy soldier makers."

Steve Hare, who worked with Alan at Tradition:

"I first met Alan in the late 1960's when he visited the shop Tradition had in Dover St., Mayfair, and I remember that Alan showed me the Stadden figures and what he could make by hand animation (Alan had earlier worked and trained under Charles C Stadden, a master figure legend in his own right). Alan also introduced me to the Tradition magazine which was, at the time, very expensive for a young collector. Little did I know that six years later, I'd be working with Alan as he became a director of Military Heritage in Camden Passage where I worked. In the mid 70's Tradition moved everything to Shepherds Street, Mayfair.

Alan still worked on the masters, starting on a new range of 80mm pieces. Plus new 54mm diorama figures including the famous first parts of the Retreat from Moscow. Alan's personal favourite was the 54mm Squadron range of British and Colonial

figures which he added to over the years. A new range of Tradition 54 mm kit figures followed to replace the animated figure range.

I remember him sitting on a bar stool behind the counter of the once sherry & oyster bar, working on the masters. I was amazed how quickly he worked, making the masters all in metal - no resin or modelling materials then. One thing I will say is, he must've had asbestos hands as a trick he used to play on me, and others, was to pass us a freshly finished master which was still red hot. He would always laugh when I or anyone else suddenly realised the beautiful figure in our hands was a still a little on the warm side!

In the early 80's, Alan left Tradition to start a new company with Derek Cross called All The Queen's Men. Later in the 80's, he started doing freelance work again. He added many new figures to help enlarge Tradition's ranges, plus he worked for numerous other companies.

Alan was always generous with his time and willing to help, especially when I couldn't find a uniform detail. I'd phone Alan and he would say, "Give me five minutes." I would then get a call back with the full details plus much more. Nothing was too much trouble, or a problem. He took it all in his stride.

A loss to the hobby of someone so talented with a vast knowledge of military uniforms and history. Many of the toy figure companies would not exist without the help and assistance of Alan Caton; I shall raise a glass to him!"

Dave Love of Mountford Metal Miniatures:

"I knew Alan by reputation from the early 90's from my mentor, Norman Abbey, who was teaching me how to sculpt. I'd read about Alan too in the various publications relating to our business, so, I was thrilled to meet the man himself at EuroMilitaire in 1997 when he visited our stand and passed favourable comments on some artillery pieces I had on display.

After that, we saw him three or four times a year at the various shows in London where he would always come to our stand for a chat, though he was always more reticent with my wife Mary.



→ Eventually, after a few years, we decided to start a project together. I would make the guns and Alan would sculpt the figures.

Alan didn't suffer fools and was quick to say when he was displeased – believe me, he only had to bark R! A! F! at me once when I had the temerity to refer to his beloved service as the raff. I didn't make that mistake again. We would also have a good moan about all the unsolicited phone calls we both received. One way he used to get rid of the caller would be to adopt his best Jeeves voice and say, "His Lordship is unavailable. May I take a message?"

Alan lived for his work and lived amongst his work. He had little time for home comforts and found it hilarious that I took more than a passing interest in food – hence his nickname for me – Noshier. Food was just fuel to him, so much so, that he diverted the 30amp power supply meant for a cooker from his kitchen to his shed (he would much rather feed his casting machine than himself) and even though he hated gardening, he did keep his grass mowed because if he didn't, as he told others, it would give the Zulus somewhere to hide – A Rourke's Drift analogy, so typical of him.

Alan was a unique man – talented, knowledgeable, kind and generous. His passing has left a gap in mine and Mary's lives. He was our friend and we miss him."

Clive Gande of The Model Armoury:

"I knew Alan initially as Trooper from the Treefrog forum. He was an attendee at the show get together in the pub (which I couldn't attend as I was on my stand). However he would visit and comment on our products and we compared notes on products and poses. It wasn't until much later that I found he was the Alan Caton and what he didn't know about sculpting and uniforms probably wasn't worth knowing anyway. When we started up The Model Armoury, I wanted to do less fighting poses and more story telling. Alan jumped at that and furnished so many photos and descriptives, that we're still working through them now. He cleverly made figures and poses that could be useful in a number of settings. What I, and I know others, valued so highly was his passion for the hobby/business. He always had time to help answer questions and give guidance. In my case, he was at pains to explain the whole sculpting casting, production process with infinite patience and a very dry sense of humour.

It seemed he started many of our conversations with, "Now Clive, what we've got to consider is..." usually meaning I that hadn't quite understood, but he was too polite to say. A sad loss to the hobby, he was a well-respected and extremely talented individual."

Alan leaves behind a legacy and a contribution to this hobby that will be hard to emulate. Most collectors, particularly of gloss painted figures, will have a Caton inspired or influenced figure in their collection. At this sad time, it is difficult to celebrate but celebrate we must, and recognise Alan's significant involvement in the hobby. A regular and instantly recognisable personality at the three London shows each year, I will personally miss our chats and catch ups as to what might be being released in the



Alan (third from right) with British members of the Treefrog Treasures forum where he went under the username of Trooper

coming months and, of course, his strong views on the hobby and the direction it might go in the future. He was also very generous with his time and would always find the time to reply to emails and answer queries that I might have on the hobby in general. Like Mark Avery mentioned to me when I informed him of Alan's passing, he was also very kind and welcoming to all of us when we started out in this hobby, no matter our levels of knowledge.

Alan was a regular contributor on the Treefrog Treasures Forum, always happy to share his vast military knowledge and sculpting skills with collectors the world over. Whilst at the same time, whenever possible, taking the opportunity to highlight the many UK toy soldier companies which tend to go unnoticed and under the radar in other parts of the world. Testament to this can be seen by the number of tree frog forum members who have taken the time to post on the forum their memories of the man following news of his sudden death with all of them mentioning that he will be missed as a source of information and a like-minded toy soldier enthusiast and email friend!


I am sure that I speak for many when I echo the comments of those above. He has truly had a marked influence on the hobby as a whole and I think it is only right and fitting that contribution should be marked in the pages of this magazine.

Like Steve Hare and no doubt others that have shared their memories of Mr Caton in this article, I will raise a glass to mark his vast contribution to the hobby. Rest in peace, Alan.



Some of the British members of the Treefrog forum raised a glass in Alan's memory at the December show

Footnote

For those readers that might be interested, I understand from the executors of Alan's estate that donations can be made to the RAF Benevolent Fund for those who might want to mark Alan's lifetime in the hobby. 

Text by Martin Ainscough

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New Releases 1

Reviews of new metal figures to arrive in the hobby by
Mark Avery and **Martin Ainscough**



The new pigeon loft version
of the Old Bill Bus

The Model Armoury

WWI variations of the Old Bill Bus

Nobody could say that the Old Bill Bus wasn't versatile. Evidence of this can be clearly seen with the latest offerings from the Model Armoury, marketed by Clive Gande of Grey Goose Collectibles fame.

A regular and familiar sight in 1930's London, it was initially commandeered during WWI first and foremost to be employed on the Western

Front as a troop transport vehicle. The latest release from this fairly new kid on the block, the brain child and collaboration between Dave Love (Mountford Miniatures), Clive Gande, the owner of Grey Goose Collectibles (under whose banner Model Armoury figures are marketed), and the recently deceased and already sorely missed

Alan Caton, features this stalwart of public transport of the time, suitably converted to its new role.

The first example of the Old Bill in its new guise on display back in December at the Business Design Centre shows the vehicle stripped of its London Transport livery and trappings, which have been replaced by a drab, dull green livery. All evidence of its previous use has been totally obliterated. The windows of the bottom deck have been totally blacked out by wooden boards while the top deck too has had the sides filled in. This

is a truly excellent model and true representation of the real life vehicle which gave such sterling service transporting troops to and from the front line. The vehicle (WF-17) retails at £295 and in my opinion is a must have for any WWI-inspired collector. To compliment the vehicle, the company has also released a six figure bus passenger set (WF-17A). These figures are nicely posed with two of them caught in the act of climbing the stairs to the seats on the top deck, while another lights

a cigarette before embarking. His colleague already on the top deck shouts to him and his mates to get a move on! The six figure set is priced at £135. They are shown here with a matte painted finish, but I seem to remember that figures and sets could be produced in either matte or gloss to suit customers' preferences, so check with Clive when ordering what is available. A previous set of passengers (priced at £145) again nicely animated by the late Alan

Caton, are also available, which I think would be compatible with the Old Bill Troop Carrier, but again, I would suggest that you check with Clive first before ordering.

The second variation (WF-16) again priced at £295, sees the Old Bill in a totally different light. This time, it has exchanged its human passengers for those of the feathered variety. Now also decked out in battle camouflage, it is the home for some of the many pigeons that were

used during the war to carry messengers back and forward between the front and headquarters which well behind the front line. The boarded up windows have gone and been replaced by what I can only describe as a mobile pigeon loft! Superbly modelled with detail second to none, it is one of the many unusual vehicles that have been born out of a necessity of war. Again to compliment this vehicle, a four-figure set of pigeon handlers (WF-16A) priced

at £95 have been released that are depicted in the day to day duties of caring for their charges. Another earlier set of pigeon handlers is also available priced at £66 by quoting GWB-15B when ordering, although I would again advise checking with Clive that this set and the bus passenger set two, mentioned above, are still available prior to placing an order for any of the vehicles or sets covered here to avoid disappointment.

Review by Martin Ainscough



The new Troop Carrier version of the Old Bill Bus

CONTACT

The Model Armoury
c/o Grey Goose Collectables Ltd
Sparrow Wycke Farm
Maldon Road
Mundon
Essex CM9 6PB
Tel: 01621 743815
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NAP0513 French Sled Carrying Wounded Soldiers and Cantiniere \$485.00

NAP0510 French Grenadier Standing Loading - 18th Line Infantry \$69.95

NAP0512 French Cuirassier Shooting Pistol - 2nd Cuirassiers \$69.95

NAP0511 French Fusilier Reaching for Cartridge - 4th Line Infantry \$69.95

First Legion

Various new releases

A rather 'mixed bag' this issue from Matt Pavone and his team at First Legion. Usually, Matt will release a large amount of figures for one or two ranges each month, however, this issue, I've got details on new figures for four ranges!

First up, there are four new releases for the Retreat from Russia (a not-so-mini series which falls under the main Napoleon's Europe range). Three of the figures are the more stand fare, and feature poses such as shooting, loading and reaching for a cartridge, although all three figures are from different regiments as there's a Grenadier (18th Line), Fusilier (4th Line) and a Cuirassier (2nd). All figures are well posed and have a very high level of painting as you would expect with the FL brand.

By far the best, in my opinion, of these four new releases is the piece entitled 'French Sled Carrying Wounded Soldiers and Cantiniere'. This set needs little explanation,

given the title and photographs but, suffice to say, the detailing is superb, for example, just look at the sash around the driver's waist or the bandage on the soldier's foot.

Moving away from Napoleon and, in fact, further back in time, FL has added 16 new Romans to its rapidly growing 'Glory of Rome' series. I was quite surprised to see the addition of another Roman Legion, given that FL has already covered the Legio I Minerva and Legio VI Victrix but as the company states on its website, "Due to the success and rapid sellout of these figures, we are now following them up with Legio I Adiutrix. The new legion features unbleached tunics and skirts and the classic 'wreath' shield design. Legio I Adiutrix



ROM133 Imperial Roman Vexillifer - Legio I Adiutrix \$74.95

ROM132 Imperial Roman Signifer - Legio I Adiutrix \$74.95

was formed in 68AD and took part in a variety of battles and campaigns including Germanic/Marcomannic Wars under Marcus Aurelius, the final battle of which was featured in the opening of the film, 'Gladiator.' So they are a wonderful complement to Minerva and Victrix, and allow for dioramas to now feature multiple legions, each with a unique look deployed side by side."

I guess, when put like that, it makes perfect sense and given the sell out of both previous Legions, I can confidently assume that this series is proving very popular indeed. Due to space limitations, we can only show a selection of the 16 figures, which are my personal favourites, but if you'd like to see them all simply visit FL's very comprehensive website. I particularly like the bleached tunics these figures have been given, as they certainly add some vari-



ROM127 Imperial Roman Centurion - Legio I Adiutrix \$64.95



ROM128 Imperial Roman Optio - Legio I Adiutrix \$64.95



ROM137 Imperial Roman Legionary with Two Pilum - Legio I Adiutrix \$62.95



ROM139 Imperial Roman Legionary with Gladius - Legio I Adiutrix \$62.95



ROM130 Imperial Roman Imaginifer - Legio I Adiutrix \$69.95



ROM131 Imperial Roman Cornicen - Legio I Adiutrix \$69.95



CRU098 Teustonic Knight Attacking with Axe \$69.95

ation to any large display, and if I were to pick one figure it would have to be the Imaginifer as he's one imposing looking character. Sculpting and paint work is of the highest quality once again and prices are fair, ranging from \$63 to \$75 per figure.

Next up is a single figure release for the Crusades series. I was quite surprised by this one as I know Matt and FL usually release a few figures at a time for each range unless, of course, it's a major character from the period which, in this case, it isn't. This Teustonic Knight attacking with an axe is a fairly standard figure (that is, if you can ever use the term 'standard' when talking about FL pieces!). He is depicted in full chainmail with what looks to be a leather (inset possibly with metal plate) breastplate, full faced helmet resplendent

with ornate and colourful horns posed swinging his rather terrifying axe towards an opposing foe (no doubt one of FL's Mamluks). Again, a really well produced figure which is fairly priced at around \$70.

Finally for this issue, there are two new pieces of WWII armour in the shape of a PzKpw IV Ausf F1 (with the short 75mm barrel) and a PzKpw IV Ausf F2 (with the long 75mm barrel and Win-

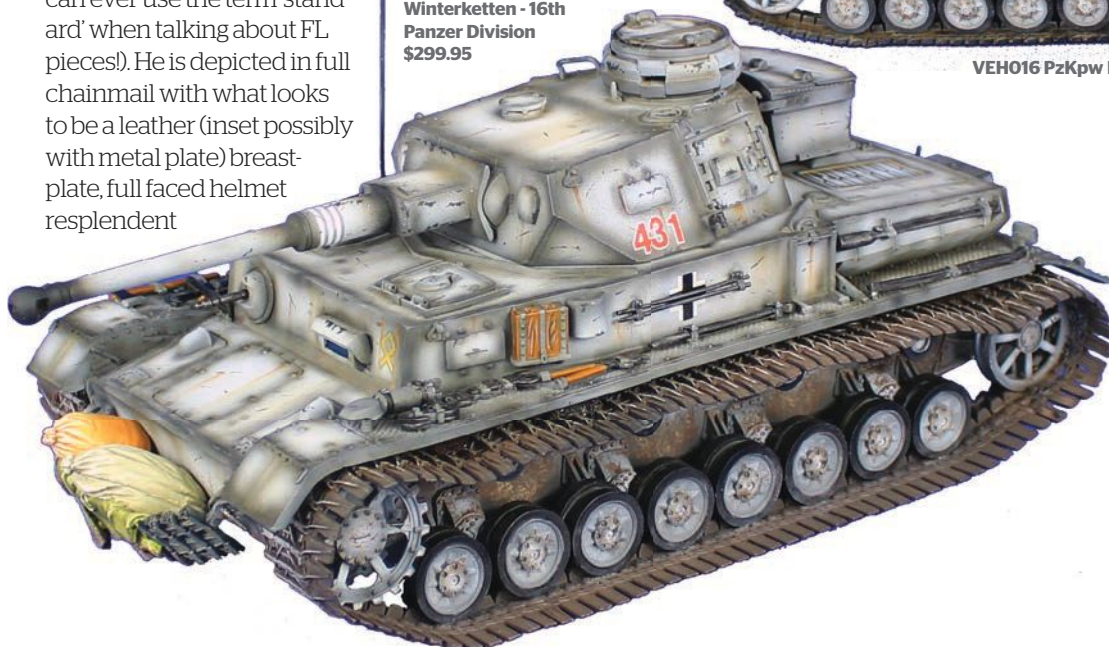
terketten). Both vehicles come from the 16th Panzer Division and will, I'm sure, be a welcome addition to FL's many WWII collectors. Either model is priced at a fraction under \$300 and each

features some good details in the form of sacks, crates and jerry cans, etc., strapped to either the front or back.

All FL figures reviewed are approximately 60mm (1:30 scale) and pricing is only listed in dollars. For UK retail pricing, please contact your local FL dealer.

Review by Mark Avery

VEH017 PzKpw IV Ausf F2 with Long Barrel 75mm and Winterketten - 16th Panzer Division \$299.95



VEH016 PzKpw IV Ausf F1 with Short Barrel 75mm - 16th Panzer Division \$299.95

CONTACT

First Legion Ltd

PO Box 1540
Newburyport
MA 01950
USA

Tel: +1 978 925 5067
www.firstlegionltd.com

UK stockists are Magpie (Manchester House) Ltd, Maison Militaire, Piers Christian & The Treasure Bunker (contact details for most of these can be found in their respective adverts within this magazine).



MK154 Merlin £50.95/\$49



MK153 Queen Guinevere £50.95/\$49



MK155 Sir Lamorak £46.95/\$45



MK150 Sir Peleas £46.95/\$45

King & Country

Various new releases

Being one of what I would call the 'big boys', K&C release so many new sets every month that we can never cover absolutely everything. Until now, I've always tried to show every figure from each range release, however, I think it might be time to change my approach. With another of the 'big boys', First Legion, I've taken to covering the range releases but due to space limitations, often just show my personal favourite figures from the releases. To try and cover more of what K&C are up to, I'm going to try this approach, but by all means all you K&C fans out there, write or email me and tell me what you prefer.

OK, so let's get started by heading to the court of King Arthur. I covered the initial releases for 'At the Court of King Arthur' a few issues ago and was really impressed with the quality of the figures as well as the rather striking round table. Although not a traditional 'action' series, I really like this one as it's something a little different which is being very well produced (unlike some

other attempts I've seen over the years). To accompany the initial releases, Arthur now gets more of his trusted knights, Sir Peleas, Caradoc, Lucan and Lamorak, his beautiful Queen Guinevere (who, if you believe the legend, ultimately brought about the demise of the Kingdom), as well as his closest adviser, the wizard, Merlin.

All of the figures are really well sculpted and painted and although you're going to need to buy all of them if you want to represent the period, and more importantly the round table, correctly, my favourites are Sir Lucan (I love the 80's look - headband, big moustache and what looks like a mullet-style haircut!) and his complete opposite, the foreboding and stern Sir Peleas, and, of course, Merlin who you can see, the K&C team have had real fun with. Pricing for the new figures

ranges from £46.95/\$45 for the knights to £50.95/\$49 for Guinevere and Merlin.

Staying with English history, although skipping forward a thousand years, we come to K&C's next set of new releases which can be used for the ECW (as well as the Thirty Years War) and are branded under the range name of 'Pike & Musket'. There are a total of six new figures - five of which are what I would call 'standard' figures/poses. These are a pointing roundhead trooper

(mounted), roundhead scout (mounted), dismounted roundhead officer and two walking musketeers. The most unusual of the new figures is the bread and beer seller, as K&C states, 'where the army went, so did some of the camp followers'. Here, a comely wench has some freshly baked bread and a few flagons of beer (or it may be cider) to sell to thirsty and hungry troopers. Again, all figures are very well detailed and personally I like the female figure, simply because she could serve a purpose in numerous period dioramas, as well as the mounted scout who, with mouth open, is clearly trying to get a message back to his comrades.

PnM047
Roundhead
Scout
£47.95/\$45



PnM040
Walking
Musketeer
£50.95/\$49

PnM048 Bread & Beer
Seller £111.95/\$109

GA021(B) Covering Fire
£91.95/\$89



GA020 Advancing Rifleman
£46.95/\$45



GA006 Simmo and His Donkey £127.95/\$125

GA024 The Deadly Shovel
£91.95/\$89



Pricing for these figures ranges from £47.95/\$45 for the bread and beer seller, £50.95/\$49 for the other foot figures and £111.95/\$109 for the mounted figures.

The penultimate range getting coverage this issue is 'Back up on Lone Pine', K&C's range which focuses on the Australian Gallipoli campaign of WWI. The first figure being added to the range is Simmo (Private John Simpson) and his donkey. Simpson was an English-born stretcher bearer who, from April 25 1915 until his death (from machine gun fire) on May 19 saved many lives by transporting the wounded from the frontline to first aid posts near the beach using his faithful donkeys. In addition to Simmo and his donkey (priced at £127.95/\$125), there's a set of three Turkish casualties (£101.95/\$99), two Anzac riflemen (£46.95/\$45 each) and two sets containing a kneeling firing rifleman with his comrade, who is about to throw a bomb (£91.95/\$89). These sets

and the two rifleman differ by one being in the off-white shirt and the other in the blue/grey shirt. Finally, and my favourite, is "The deadly shovel" set, which shows an Anzac battling it out with a Turkish soldier, with the one weapon he has left, his entrenching tool (£91.95/\$89).

The Battle of the Bulge is remembered as one of the harshest winter battles from WWII and for the past few years, K&C has commemorated it with releases to coincide with the date the battle actually took place (December 16

1944). This year is no different and the Hong Kong-based company has four new sets for its BOTB collectors.

'Keepin warm' depicts two GIs, one smoking, as they huddle around a large drum which has been made into a temporary fire to try and keep warm. 'Winter action' shows the moment one GI obviously spots something through his binoculars as his mate takes careful aim with his rifle whilst their other colleague readies himself for action. In addition to the named sets, there's also a M1A1 57mm anti-tank gun manned by two determined looking GIs who are about to unleash another armour piercing round towards the approaching German

vehicles, and finally, there's an MP who is on the lookout for any Germans trying to infiltrate the Allied lines. All of these new releases are again beautifully sculpted and painted and pricing ranges from £48.95/\$47 for the MP to £142.95/\$139 for the anti-tank gun and crew.

Review by Mark Avery

BBA085 Standing Military Policeman
£48.95/\$47



BBA056 Keepin Warm
£101.95/\$99



BBA083 M1A1 57mm Anti-Tank Gun £142.95/\$139

CONTACT

King & Country
Room 2301
No. Lockhart Road
Wanchai
Hong Kong
Tel: + 852 2861 3450
www.kingandcountry.com

In the UK:
King & Country UK
Unit 17 Enterprise City
Meadowfield Avenue
Green Lane Industrial Estate
Spennymoor
Co Durham
DL16 6JF
Tel: 01388 818882
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Alexander's Toy Soldiers

Various new releases

Hardly a month goes by without at least one new release from the excellent gloss toy soldier maker Nik Biberovic of Alexander's Toy soldiers. Since reacquainting myself with this marvellous hobby, when taking early retirement back in 2005, when I acquired a couple of 'special' mounted Prussian Dragoons, there has been a steady stream of new figures across all of the ranges that make up the extensive ATS catalogue. Add to that the introduction of at least two completely new ranges and you get a real sense that Nik is one of the true giants and big players of the gloss toy soldier world.

At the December London show, Nik unveiled a number of new figures that will hopefully impress you all as much as they did me. As with the Crimean range, Nik's offerings from the English Civil War have, in a very short period of time, grown into a series of figures that is proving popular with collectors of this particular period of history. Close on

the heels of the exquisite and excellently posed and painted mounted Sir Edward Varney, Standard Bearer to Charles I, and reviewed in issue 65, comes an action posed two figure vignette, which features a parliamentary and royalist cavalryman locked in a duel. Beautifully posed, the two protagonists are depicted in close combat on rearing horses as they jostle for position and survival! As with most of the mounted figures produced by ATS, the masters for these latest figures in the ECW range were commissioned from the late Alan Caton, with the result that two completely new horses have been added to the already vast array of poses available to the collector across the whole of the ATS product line. What I particularly like about this latest offering in the ECW series is that the Royalist figure's uniform can be painted in any number of different combinations, with the result that quite a few variations of this particular piece are possible, which is very good news for the diorama-themed collector. This two-figure set is priced at £100 inclusive of post and packing

ECW Royalist Life Guard Trooper & Downed Horse - £45



ECW Royal Standard Bearer to King Charles on foot - £50

Retreat to Corunna - British Infantryman Looting - £16.50

(all ATS figure prices quoted are inclusive of p&p) which, for gloss painted figures of this quality, represents excellent value for money.

Continuing the ECW theme, the latest foot figure released in this range is a Royal Standard Bearer (£50). As with the mounted version mentioned above, the attention to detail and accuracy on the painting of the actual standard is second to none. This is an ideal companion to the mounted version and the two figures complement each other very well.

The third new figure to be released in this range will, I am sure, again be of interest to those collectors who wish to showcase their figures in a diorama setting. It features a downed Royalist Life Guard Trooper (£45) using his wounded mount as cover. He is depicted in the act of firing at his enemies with a flintlock pistol, so with only one shot available to him, his aim needs to be good!

Nik has always wanted to show military life away from the battle front and a number of stand-alone figures, together with vignettes and dedicated sets that collectively tell their own story, have been released

over recent years. One such themed mini-series of figures were released in the Napoleonic range under the heading of 'Napoleon & Wellington on Campaign' and featured such subjects as surgeons at work in the field hospital and more recently, Empress Dragoons at reveille on the morning prior to the battle of Waterloo. The newest release in this series features a number of troopers of the 2nd Royal North British Dragoons, more commonly referred to as the Scots Greys. This is a similar set to the Empress Dragoons and features members of the regiment at reveille around the campfire, no doubt at the crack of dawn. The set consists of a total of six foot figures made up of a bugler sounding reveille, two colleagues sitting round the campfire - one of which is in the act of putting another log on the fire, two officers deep in conversation, perhaps discussing the orders of the day which have just arrived, and another trooper who is dressing with his tunic draped over his shoulder. The set is completed with a couple of mounts at the hitching post - greys of course, which made the regiment instantly recognisable from others on the battlefield. A number of accessories are also included



British Napoleonic Cavalry - 2nd Royal North British Dragoons - Scots Greys on campaign - £190

with the set, including the campfire and trunk, as in the photograph, with the whole set retailing at £190.

An additional figure has also joined the ranks of the Retreat to Corunna series of figures. A British Infantryman has been released. He is depicted making good his escape with his booty in the form of a pig under his arm. He retails at £16.50 and is a novel addition to the previously released figures that collectively help to illustrate this most famous of events from the Napoleonic War period.

The last release from ATS for this issue features figures from one of its fledgling ranges - British 1650-1700 and covers the events of the conflict between William III and James II. The Death of Schomberg (£98) was one of the major events of this period and happened at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. The ATS take on this historical event features the very moment that Schomberg is shot and falls. Schomberg is an interesting character and had a varied and chequered life, not to mention military service.

In 1673, he went to England at the invitation of Charles II to form an army for the proposed invasion of Holland, but soon returned to the French Army and was on Louis XIV's staff at the siege and capture of Maastricht in June 1673. In 1675 he was one of eight Marshalls of France appointed on the death of Turenne. However, the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 drove Schomberg, a staunch Protestant, from France but he was welcomed by Frederick William of Brandenburg, known as the 'Great Elector' and in 1688 when the Elector lent Schomberg and a Prussian Force to William of Orange, who would later become William III of Great Britain, he found himself in England. He was naturalised as English in April of 1689 and in May of the same year, was created Baron of Teyes, Earl of Brentford and Marquis of Harwich. He went to Ireland as William's Commander in Chief, pitted against James II, in August of 1689 and met his demise at the hand of Irish cavalry loyal to James in July 1690 at the Battle of the Boyne. The set is made up of Schomberg in the act of falling from his horse and the individual member of the Irish cavalry firing the fatal shot.

Review by Martin Ainscough



Death of Schomberg at the Battle of the Boyne - £98



Duelling ECW Cavalry - Two Figure Vignette - £100

CONTACT

Alexander's Toy Soldiers
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Casting around

Paul Stocker takes a look at the latest toy soldier castings to arrive on the market



Sepoy mutineer

British infantry

Saluting soldier

British naval officer

Afghan

Sailor

Irregular Miniatures

Various new releases

Ian Kay's most recent release is a foot figure at attention and saluting wearing a great-coat, which was originally made for a customer who was building a diorama of Queen Victoria's funeral. It could be used, with or without added details, for a variety of periods and nationalities from around the mid-19th century onwards. It is cast without a head to offer just such a broad spectrum of options and Ian can supply any of his wide range of heads as required.

Ian's range of figures depicting the Indian Mutiny of 1857 to 1858 has expanded to include all the main participants - British (i.e. East India Company) infantry, Sepoy mutineers, loyal Sikhs and Gurkhas, Afghans and a naval landing party and naval gun. The aftermath of the Mutiny itself would see the end of the once all-powerful East India Company and the birth of the British Raj.

The figures are mostly one-piece castings but a few figures, such as two of the

sailors, are cast with open hands to take weapons. So, there is little or no assembly required before painting.

The castings are 54mm scale approx and cost £3.75 each. The naval gun with an officer and three sailors costs £25. Postage: UK 10%, Europe 20%, Rest of the World 20% (Surface) or 30% (Airmail) (40% for scenery). Ian can now accept PayPal but please add 3% or add 5% for conversion charges if not paying in GB £'s.

For customers who would prefer to buy painted figures, Ian can provide a painting service and offers toy or connoisseur painting styles. For example, a painted 54mm infantryman costs £11 (toy

style) or £21 (connoisseur) and a painted 54mm cavalryman costs £21 (toy style) or £33 (connoisseur). Separate prices apply to such items as elephants, camels or gun teams. Prices include the cost of the casting and P&P is only added to the unpainted price.

CONTACT

Irregular Miniatures Ltd
41 Lesley Avenue
York
YO10 4JR
Tel: 01904 671101
www.irregularminiatures.co.uk

All the King's Men

American Civil War Zouaves

Ken Cliffe has followed up his ACW troops in frock coats with a set depicting the Zouaves, probably the most colourful and flamboyant troops in the War between the States.

A surprisingly large number of regiments adopted the Zouave title and the North African inspired uniforms on the outbreak of the war. The Union army had more than seventy volunteer Zouave regiments during the conflict and the Confederate side had around twenty-five Zouave companies (i.e. rather than full regiments). In the early part of the war, the Zouaves tended to be deployed as light infantry, adopting open-order formations rather than the customary close order and moving at double-time rather than marching at the slower pace of other troops. In 1863 and 1864, three Union regiments (146th New York, 140th New York,

and 155th Pennsylvania) were issued with Zouave uniforms in recognition of their drill and battlefield performance. Difficulties in supply and replacement inevitably meant that Zouave and other exotic militia uniforms tended to be replaced by standard issue uniforms as the war went on. However, the Zouave tradition remained strong and the last Union casualty of the fighting in Virginia was reported to be a Zouave of the 155th Pennsylvania, killed at Farmville, Virginia, on the morning of April 9, 1865.

Ken's standard Zouave figure set contains twelve marching soldiers, an officer and a colour bearer and costs \$40. A command set containing the officer and colour bearer plus a drummer costs \$15. Bodies and heads and some arms are cast separately to allow for maximum versatility. Individual figures can also be ordered



Zouave castings



Zouave command group castings



Painted Zouave command group

from Ken's website for \$5 each and sets of separate heads are available in packs of twelve for \$5. The packs available are heads in fezzes, bearded and clean shaven; heads in fezzes and turbans, bearded and clean shaven; heads in straw hats in the style of Wheat's Tigers, bearded and clean shaven. And the Zouaves can

even be ordered with Ken's existing heads wearing kepis if preferred, so customers can hardly complain about a lack of choice.

Ken's figures measure 56mm approx. For orders up to \$50, shipping costs are approximately \$8 per set assuming a Continental US customer but shipping rates drop per set according to the size of the order (e.g. \$22 for orders up to \$400). Contact Ken about the cost to destinations outside the USA.



Painted Zouaves

CONTACT

All the King's Men Toy Soldiers LLC
2456 Hewatt Rd
Snellville
GA 30039
USA

Tel: +1 770 978 1645
www.allthekingsmentoyssoldiers.com



English Men at Arms castings

Tradition of London

Napoleonic Prussian Landwehr Infantry

When I featured the English Archers and French Crossbowmen re-issued by Tradition some time ago, I mentioned that there would be a previously unissued medieval set to follow. This is now available in the shape of eight Englishmen at Arms which can be bought as castings or as a painted set.

The term 'Man at Arms' is sometimes misunderstood. It was a term used from the late Medieval to Renaissance periods usually to describe a soldier, a professional warrior who was well-trained in the use of arms and equipped to serve as a mounted armoured soldier. The terms 'knight' and 'man at arms' can be interchangeable, but while all knights equipped for war were men-at-arms, not all men-at-arms were knights; some were professional mercenaries. The Tradition figures have the look of mercenaries rather than members of the nobility.

Tradition's set consists of a captain and seven men at arms, all on foot and reflecting

the fact that Henry V's army at Agincourt fought on foot (and despite what Laurence Olivier's 1945 film of 'Henry V' might have you believe, so did most of the French army as well). They depict a variety of armour and weapons around the time of the battle, but they would be suitable as troops for any of the campaigns of the later years of the Hundred Years War.

Henry V's victory on 25 October 1415 (Saint Crispin's Day) was a crushing defeat for the French, but fighting continued until 1420 when the Treaty of Troyes acknowl-

edged Henry as Regent and successor to the French king on the latter's death. But this was effectively nullified when Henry died in 1422 and was succeeded by his infant son, Henry VI. Although the English would have a number of other victories in subsequent years, their fortunes gradually declined as the cost of the war took its toll on English resources and their defeat at the Battle of Castillon in 1453 effectively brought the Hundred Years War to an end. Two years later, England would be engulfed by the Wars of the Roses.

Like the re-issued archers and crossbowmen, the Men at Arms are smaller than more recent releases in Tradition's toy soldier ranges. They are clean and very attractive

castings and are likely to be welcomed as companions to the earlier two sets as well as Tradition's toy foot and mounted knights. Assembly only consists of attaching their right arms and a combined sword and buckler and the fit of these parts is fine. It seemed to me that the legs of the castings were a little out of proportion to their upper bodies but this might just be me because it didn't seem so noticeable with the painted versions.

The English men at arms castings measure 56mm approx and cost £8.45 each. The eight figures gloss painted are available as Toy Soldier set MS3 which costs £104.75. Postage costs: UK 15%, minimum £3.95; 10%; EC Countries 20%, minimum £6.00; Overseas 25%, minimum £7.50.



English Men at Arms painted set

CONTACT

Tradition of London
(RP World Models)

The Barracks
Maville Works
Beech Avenue
Basford
Nottingham
NG7 7LU

Tel: 0115 9427462
www.traditionoflondon.com
www.rpworldmodels.net



Welsh archer and horn blower castings



Welsh archer and horn blower painted

Dorset Soldiers

Various new releases

Giles Brown's new releases include some more attractive figures from his friend, Mr Jones of Wales. The mounted cowboy has something of a Wyatt Earp look about him thanks to his long coat and

luxurious moustache and he can be used with one of Giles' 'P' range horses. The cowboy casting costs £3.30 (£9.50 painted gloss) or £10.50 with a horse (£25 painted gloss).

Mr Jones has also pro-

duced a useful Welsh archer and a horn blower, which I imagine are intended to join the splendid figure of Owen Glendower and the earlier Welsh levies reviewed here some time ago. These two new castings cost £3.30 each (£9.50 each painted gloss).

Giles' new Mexican Rurales (the mounted police force in service in Mexico between 1861 and 1914) are based on originals by Brit-

duced a useful Welsh archer and a horn blower, which I imagine are intended to join the splendid figure of Owen Glendower and the earlier Welsh levies reviewed here some time ago. These two new castings cost £3.30 each (£9.50 each painted gloss).

Giles' new Mexican Rurales (the mounted police



Boxer archers painted



Marine, Boxer archer and WWI machine gunner castings



Mounted cowboy casting



Mounted cowboy painted



Mexican Rurales painted

ains. The officer and marching figures are as originally produced and the figure firing a rifle and the musician are conversions by Giles. The castings cost £3.30 or £3.70 for the musician (£9.50 painted gloss).

The new Chinese archer figure may look like a warrior from ancient times but he is actually from the Boxer Rebellion, the uprising against foreign presence and influence in China between 1899 and 1901. The casting costs £3.30 (£11 painted gloss). The Chinese Tiger man with the vicious looking pole arm also looks like an ancient warrior but he is also from the Boxer Rebellion and that casting costs £4.10 (£11 painted gloss).

The Royal Marine at



Paperboy and publican castings

present arms joins Giles' various other copies of Britains parade figures and he can be converted to use as Line infantry or Guards. The casting costs £4.10 (£9.50 painted gloss).

The prone Highlander firing the machine gun originally appeared with a Foreign



British artillery officer, Croat sailor and Boxer Tiger man castings

Service helmet for a colonial role but he can now be had with either a steel helmet or a Glengarry to serve in WWI. The casting costs £3.30 (£9.50 painted gloss).

The WWII British artillery officer in the classic pose with binoculars is another copy of an original by Britains. He costs £3.70 as a casting (£9.50 painted gloss). A bit more unusual is a WWII Croat sailor wearing a very German looking uniform. He costs £4.10 as a casting (£9.50 painted gloss).

There are a couple of new civilian items in the shape of a publican, a copy of a Hilco original and a newspaper boy designed by Mr Jones. The publican is about 58mm tall and costs £4.10 as a casting (£11 painted gloss). The paperboy costs £3.30 as a casting (£9.50 painted gloss).

A new figure of a deer is a reproduction of the Britains original except that the antlers are cast separately to provide a choice of bucks or does. Castings cost £4.10 each (£9.50 painted gloss).

Some new fence sections

are available for farm or other settings and castings cost £4.10 each (£6 painted gloss). And finally, Giles has reproduced Britains' telegraph pole for just about any setting where a telegraph pole would be appropriate and that casting costs £9 (£15 painted gloss).

Giles' new releases are to 54mm scale approx unless otherwise stated. Postage in the UK is an additional 10% with a minimum of £3, 15% for Europe with a minimum of £5 and 25% for the rest of the world with a minimum of £5. Giles sets a minimum value of £10 for all orders.

If anyone needs an update to their castings list, Giles will be happy to provide one on request.



Deer, fence and telegraph pole castings

CONTACT

Dorset Soldiers

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Britains early set of The 5th Dragoons
(Picture courtesy of Vectis Auctions)



Britains Ltd – From small beginnings

In the first of a series of articles, **Keith Nairn-Munro** takes a look back at the history of one of the most famous names in toy soldiers

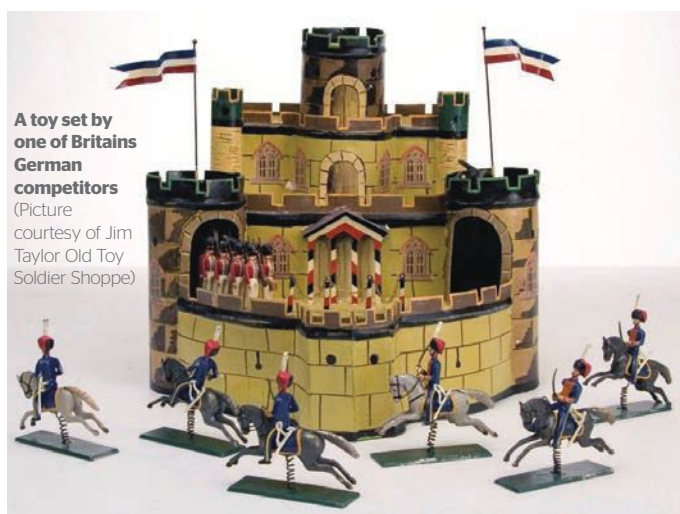
The fascination with toy soldiers is not a new phenomenon. The Pharaohs took miniature warriors with them on their death as did the Chinese Emperors, albeit the latter chose their figures to be life size. The likelihood was that this martial representation was to guard them as they passed to the next life but nonetheless, the concept of the toy soldier had been established.

As we travel down the ages, evidence of toy soldiers is constantly exhibited, however usually in the hands of the wealthy or noble. Common

A mechanical walking elephant with a Maharajah on board by Britains (Picture courtesy of Vectis Auctions)



A toy set by one of Britains German competitors (Picture courtesy of Jim Taylor Old Toy Soldier Shoppe)



children of those ages had little time to play and certainly would unlikely to have been gifted with a sophisticated carving of a miniature combatant.

Napoleon III commissioned Mignot to produce figures for the Prince Imperial (later to be killed in Zululand) whilst he himself had seventy five soldiers adorned in contemporary uniforms made from plaster of Paris. Tsar Nicholas I owned a complete collection of the Russian Guards

Regiments which had been made for him by the German company Heinrichsen.

Other German companies such as Heyde of Dresden and Elastolin were also very much to the fore. In fact, Germany dominated the toy market producing multifarious offerings only within the reach of the affluent and it was to compete in this exclusive world that William Britains's ambitions had been founded.

His clockwork toys were ingenious examples of which



Produced in 1872 this fur covered clockwork bear had wooden paws and a moveable jaw (Picture courtesy of Vectis Auctions)



Produced by Britains for C.F. Eckhardt showing a RASC Supply Wagon and Escort during the Boer War (Picture courtesy of Vectis Auctions)

there were a Scotsman drinking a bottle of whisky, a dancing bear, a walking elephant, a road roller and many others. A flywheel mechanism was a common mode of operation for Britain's models as well the standard clockwork configuration of energy transmission.

The very innovative nature of his creations was also to be their Achilles heel as they were far too complex in design to be mass produced. The resulting time consuming construction process made the toys extremely expensive costing, in some cases, five guineas (the equivalent of twice a working man's weekly wage.) He realised that this type of production did

not have a long term future, although the company would continue to sell these products until WWI.

Britain's was very much a family enterprise with his children being active in the business, initially in Birmingham before they moved to a rambling house in Hornsey, North East London. Thus, with their support and involvement, Britain began exploring other avenues of toy making. In 1893, William Jnr. discovered a way of producing hollow cast figures.

Little did the family know at that time the revolution this discovery would have on the toy world. At a stroke, toy soldier figures could be produced

quickly and cheaply and thus opened up a mass market that had been previously untapped. Suddenly, toy soldiers so many boys had only dreamed about had become a reality!

It was all hands to the pumps and in the formative years, all the family members were involved. The sons cast and trimmed the initial Life Guards and then the subsequent sets of the Horse Guards while the daughters painted and packed the figures. Each mounted soldier was cushioned on a bed of brown paper in its own individual compartment, a set of five being encased in a bright red box.

The decision was made to sculpt their figures in a 1:32 or 54mm scale basing it on the premise that a six foot man would be two and one eighth inches. This choice was influenced by the fact that, at the time, clockwork model railways were scaled at one gauge and by scaling their figures at 1:32, they could be used in conjunction with these trains.

This was to become the recognised standard scale for toy soldiers, enabling armies to have an unvarying appearance. It should be noted however, that Britains did manufacture other scales, albeit in much smaller numbers. For example, between 1897 and 1907, a 45mm cheaper range →



Charming set of the Bikaner Camel Corp part of their Indian range of figures (Picture courtesy of Vectis Auctions)



A flywheel driven miniature London road roller circa 1880 (Picture courtesy of Vectis Auctions)



The West Indian Regiment (Picture courtesy of Vectis Auctions)



Britains 4.7 inch Naval Gun could actually fire projectiles and be elevated to increase trajectory (Picture courtesy of Vectis Auctions)



3rd Madras Cavalry illustrating the plug system used to give a moveable weapon arm (Picture courtesy of Vectis Auctions)



Set 145 RAMC Ambulance released in 1906 (Picture courtesy of Vectis Auctions)

→ was sold which was followed by a very poor quality series made exclusively for Woolworths up until WWII.

As with many successful ventures, their timing of market entry was also very fortuitous. It was a time of Empire and a fierce pride in King and Country which Wm. Britain would exploit to the full.

The coincidence of the Britains name was a marketing godsend. It was not only easily remembered, but it served continually to reinforce the patriotic nature of the products

the company manufactured. This connection was further enhanced and subliminally strengthened by the distinct lettering on all their soldier boxes, 'Manufactured by Wm. Britain in London England'.

As the empire continued to expand or needed to be defended, wars were fought on a regular basis which gave Britains a never-ending source of inspiration for new products.

It was also the era when the red jacket was still prominent on home service uniforms.

Gamages 'Own Brand' figures produced by Britains (Picture courtesy of Vectis Auctions)



Smaller scale 45mm Boer War Artillery (Picture courtesy of Vectis Auctions)



Set 145A the RAMC. Ambulance released during WWI the A suffix designating khaki uniforms (Picture courtesy of Vectis Auctions)

This vibrancy of colour coupled with Britain's red boxes provided a readymade attention grabber when displayed in the toy department. The styling cues for the packaging, it is believed, were derived from the boxes of the German soldier maker Heyde.

Britains recognised the value of colour as a sales tool and on occasions, deftly altered a uniform in order to create a greater visual impact. This

occurred in the case of the Boer War Gordon Highlanders who should have been totally kitted out in khaki. However, when the set was released the figures were adorned in white helmets and full scarlet jackets.

In the early days, promoting these innovative figures was not easy for Britains. The shopkeepers of London were fairly conservative and did not wish to denude their windows





Gordon Highlanders marching The Scottish regiments were always popular with Britains customers
(Picture courtesy of Vectis Auctions)



Gordon Highlanders at trail a pose much used by Britains
(Picture courtesy of Vectis Auctions)

of their Heyde and Mignot figures to be replaced by what they deemed an inferior product.

Thus, when William Junior's brother, Fredrick, who had been designated the salesman for the family, first approached the large department stores with his toy soldier products, he was not overwhelmed by their welcome

Nevertheless, armed with several boxes of their first set of figures, Set 1 The Life Guards, Fredrick set off for Holborn to meet with the very shrewd owner of an imposing emporium called Gamages (sadly no longer there).

I suspect that Albert Gamage, who had risen from being an assistant draper to owning this very large store,

had more than an inkling of the cool reception Fredrick Britain had received from the other retailers, but was canny enough to see their potential.

Gamage, as was his policy, placed a small order to see how the figures would sell. They sold out so rapidly that he placed another order and in time, due to their success, would devote a whole department to the family's products. The Christmas display of figures would become a much awaited feature of the Yuletide Calendar for the junior customers fortunate enough to be able to visit the store.

The down side for Britains was that it was the proud boast of Gamage that he always sold at a lower price than his competition. Thus, as many small companies have experienced when dealing with a potentially large customer, they had to compromise on terms. This proved the case for Britains as Gamages sold their sets for ten and a half pennies, (in the old British money 12 pennies made one shilling which would be equivalent to 5 pence today) when their target price was one shilling.

However the benefit was that when Gamages began to sell Britain's figures, the other stores quickly followed suit retailing them at the target price and bringing volume sales for the operation.

Thankfully, Britains never made the same mistake as other makers did by giving sole rights of their products

to Gamage, however, they did allow Gamages to market a number of their figures in an 'own brand' format.

Fred Britain also established a network of wholesalers who, in contrast to the general norm of the time, were not allowed to market the figures under their own name. Nonetheless, there does seem to have been at least one exception to this policy. A company under the brand name of CFE, which stood for C.F. Eckhardt, marketed a set of an Army Services Corps Supply Wagon and Escort from the Boer War period which was made by Britains.

The opportunistic nature of Britains market entry was further exemplified by the viewpoint shared by the middle and newly established lower middle classes. They felt that these toys were the ideal play preparation for their children's future journey in life, whether it be following the call to serve one's country or to meet life's constant challenges.

For those less inspired, the onerous task of searching for what was hoped to be well received birthday or Christmas presents was over, Mr Britain had provided an endless resolution to the problem. Due to the reasonable price, it was not unusual for several sets to be bought at the same time, further contributing to the rapid expansion of the company.

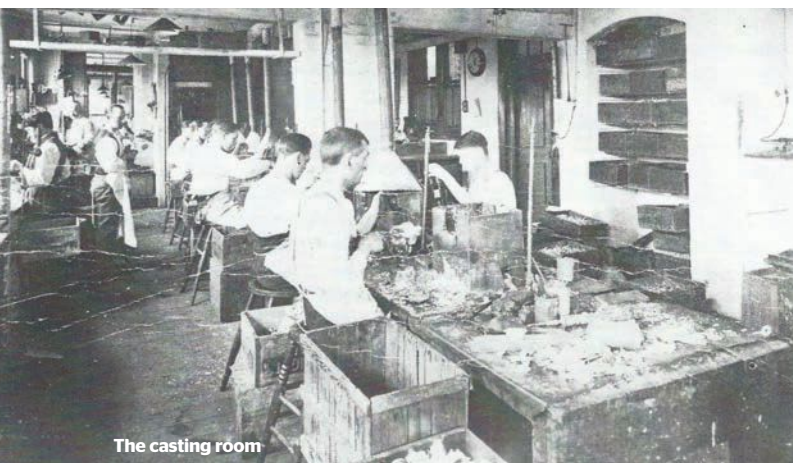
I have often wondered what the neighbours of Britain felt, as his house was situated in what must have been a fairly quiet suburb of London, metamorphosed into pulsating manufacturing works producing five million castings by 1905.

Initially, the house was extended, then the house next door was purchased and finally the two houses were demolished to be replaced by a factory, warehouse and office complex of 36000 square feet or 3344 square meters employing 300 people.

From the early days, a variety of labelling styles were used →



Royal Field Artillery launched in 1902 illustrating a more sophisticated offering



The casting room

→ to augment the visual impact of the boxes. This occurred because normally, it was left to the printer to design the labels after brief instruction from the family.

From 1914, a more consistent and distinctive label began to appear. This was as a result of the company employing a freelance artist called Fred Whisstock. Over the next seventeen years of his association with the company, his distinctive work became synonymous with Britain's products.

Fairly early on, Britains would perceive the value of exploiting a recent event that had captured the public's imagination. We would see many examples of this post WWI but one of their first ventures of this nature was the set of the West Indian Regiment released in 1894. At first glance, a seemingly strange subject but when one learns that a soldier of the regiment had just won the Victoria Cross in the Ashanti War 1893-4, their reasoning becomes clear.

In the early 1900's, the United Kingdom was a much more parochial country with people rarely travelling far



William Britain Jnr William Britain Snr
(Pictures courtesy of Vectis Auctions)

from their homes. To tap into this market, many stores utilised catalogues to advertise their array of products.

Gamages was no exception and Britains featured heavily in their store catalogue, boosting their stock of Britain's figures to over 500,000. They were quick to exploit the educational aspect of the figures in their advertising copy, coining phrases such as 'learn about the art of modern warfare' and 'it guides boys' minds to the tactics of defence and attack.' Phrases of this sentiment obviously worked, as the resultant sales growth for the retail vendors and Britains was phenomenal.

However, it was not just in the UK that the catalogue method of retailing was employed as a vehicle for sales expansion. In the outlying posts of the Empire receipt of catalogues from the main



Fred Britain

stores in the cities such as Bombay were eagerly awaited.

It was this 'free advertising' which reached to all corners of the globe that was perhaps one of the reasons that Britains became, to use a modern euphemism, the first toy 'Global Brand' and probably one of the first global brands per se.

In 1906, William Britain senior died and left the factory to his eldest daughter. As a result, the brothers decided to buy her share and form the limited company of William Britain. William Junior became the chairman while Alfred became the managing director and Fredrick retained the position of head of sales. The younger two brothers and the daughters decided to follow different career pathways.

By 1910, the company was turning out 200,000 figures a week which was the equivalent of six tons of lead. They underpinned this growth by constantly improving their products and adding innovative features such as the movable weapon arm as well as careful attention to uniform details.

It should also be added that they achieved this due to a very good and skilful workforce, with the average caster being able to produce just over 20 gross (one gross equal to 144 figures which was how output was measured in those days) or just under 3000 castings a day. The speed of the girls who formed the in-house painting team was also crucial to ensure there was no backlog in the output schedule.

The First World War was to come as a stunning blow to the company as it was feared that due to material shortages and the prevailing economic conditions, the company would have to shut down completely.


It was actually the military that saved them from closure as it was decided that the ideal lead mix for shrapnel balls was exactly the same as was used for toy soldiers. Thus, their production processes were adapted and the skilled casters turned their hands to military work. They also produced metal tokens to be spent by the soldiers at officially approved canteens.

One very strange item patented in 1915 which may have been launched prior to the commencement of their military work was an Exploding Trench. The floor of the trench actually lifted with a loud bang when a wooden shell from their naval gun hit a flag post/trigger attached to the trench. With what was occurring on the Western Front, it was a particularly insensitive item and if it was released, it was rapidly withdrawn.

Post WWI, under inspiring leadership, the company would grow to be the dominant force in the toy soldier sector. But it cannot be overemphasised that the discovery of the hollow casting method formed the foundations of the toy soldier world we know today.

Without the thousands of boys who were now able to indulge in the joys of Britain's extensive ranges, the passion and commitment to the medium might never have been born and toy soldier collecting would have remained the exclusive preserve of the wealthy.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank very much Louise Harker of Vectis Auctions for all her efforts on my behalf in the amassing of all the photographs used to illustrate this article. 

The Royal Guard of Spain

A. J. Mergenthaler looks at the history of the Royal Guard of Spain of some of the figures made to represent it

Late 20th century and contemporary Royal Guard infantryman



The emergence of Spain as a European and world power can be traced from the late fifteenth century. Spanish naval and infantry tactics dominated for the next two centuries with a vast expansion of the Spanish global empire. All of this prosperous new era was a direct result of the marriage of Ferdinand II of Aragon and Queen Isabella of Castile. The conquest of Granada and the completed expulsion of the Moslem Moors from Spain allowed for the consolidation of the country.

All kings, heads of coun-

Walloon of the Guard, early 18th century



tries, states or major military leaders had cadres of retainers or soldiers that were directly and in most cases exclusively dedicated to the protection of the individuals they were sworn to serve and defend from within or without. From antiquity to the present day, such

dedicated units have been the norm throughout the world, whether a civilized or barbaric society.

The history of the Royal Guards goes back several centuries with its most 'modern' example being the Alabaderos (Halberdiers) created by King Ferdinand →



the Catholic in 1504, making it the oldest Royal Guard in Europe. Styled after the Swiss with halberds and dedicated to the protection of the King. And eventually, they would consist of cavalry, infantry and artillery units as well.

Philip V decided in 1702 to raise a regiment of Walloon Guards that were closely modelled after the Gardes Francais (French Guards). This elite unit was first raised when the Low Countries were under the Spanish Crown. With the cession of the Spanish Netherlands to Austria at the Treaty of Utrecht in 1714, the Walloons continued to serve along with other foreign troops in the Spanish Army as they had in the past.

The Walloons were from the area known today as Belgium but was only a part of the Low Countries under Spanish rule from 1556 to 1714. The region consisted of, amongst others, Duchies, Counties and Cities such as Flanders, Artois, Cambrai, Luxembourg, Hainault, Brabant and Antwerp, etc.

It was not unusual to incorporate foreign troops in Royal Guard or special protective units. As a few examples, the Viking Varangian Guards of Byzantium, the German Singularian Guards of the Caesars or the Swiss Guards of the French Court. They all served obediently to their sworn pledges of allegiance and on occasion to the death for their dedicated oath. For example, the Swiss Guards in defence of the Tuileries Palace during the French Revolution in 1792 resulted in the death of six hundred of the nearly nine hundred guardsmen. The Lion Monument in Lucerne, Switzerland of a dying lion, carved in sandstone, commemorates the heroism and fidelity of the Swiss Guards of Louis XVI. In most instances, the foreign soldiers that either solely or partly comprised the personal body guards of



Spanish Royal Guard infantryman, late 19th early 20th century



The forerunner of the Spanish Royal Guard. An Alabadero of the King's Guard

Walloon of the Guard, 18th century



Rear view of Walloon Guard infantrymen



A standard of the Guardia Real (Royal Guard)

various leaders were the most dependable and faithful.

In the 19th century, the Walloon Guards were amongst the troops that defended Charles III during internal problems. When Napoleon invaded Spain and occupied Madrid, part of the Walloon Guards were stationed in Madrid. They were incorporated into the French Army. The French Army at this time already had a significant number of Dutch and Belgian units serving under the vaunted tricolor. There were, however, four battalions of Walloon Guards stationed in Barcelona and Aragon at the same time that remained

Illustration of Walloon Guards by Serafin de Sotto, Conde de Clonard



in Spanish service and were even involved in several actions against the French. The Walloon Guards with very few new recruits coming from the Southern Netherlands were, by 1812, reduced to only two battalions even with the addition of some Spanish volunteers joining the depleted ranks.

With the restoration of the Spanish Bourbon monarchy in 1814, the Royal Guard was reconstituted and the Walloon Guards became basically a totally Spanish unit and renamed the Second Regiment of Royal Guards of Infantry. By 1824 a new Guardia Real (Royal Guard) was raised consisting of all Spanish volunteers or conscripts from the regular army.

The Guard is, today, an independent member of the Spanish Armed Forces. They still remain a unit dedicated to the King of Spain and members of the Royal Family. Not a very large contingent, it numbers, currently about 1900 troops. It is a functioning combat unit

in addition to participating in numerous ceremonial events and parades. The members are recruited from the ranks of the three branches of the Spanish Armed Forces and must be selected by the Ministry of Defence.

Members of the Royal Guard can be seen other than on special occasions on guard or present at the Royal Palace in Madrid and at San Lorenzo de El Escorial. This is the historical residence of the Kings of Spain about thirty miles northwest of Madrid.

Whether an Immortal, Housecarl, Jannissary or Spanish Royal Guard, all had the expressed responsibility and the honour of serving and protecting their respective leader(s).

Though it is not surprising, it is nevertheless significant that all of the figures pictured in this article are or have been made in Spain. Though of different quality, they all are very good representations of Spanish Royal Guard soldiers of several time periods. **END**



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Signing off

The December Toy Soldier Show at London's Business Design Centre brought the collecting year to a satisfying close. **George Phillips** took a stroll around the twin-level exhibition area to sample the wares of more than 70 dealers from home and abroad



Ace Miniatures 54mm
16th century
European King



I've said this before, but I am always amazed by the speed with which the December Toy Soldier Show comes around each year and by association, how quickly that year has passed.

It was a relatively mild 12 degrees as I took the short walk from Angel tube station to the Business Design Centre (BDC) on the morning of December 5, 2015.

The December Show, once again, proved to be the busiest of the year, with the largest number of visitors and the brisk-est trade among the 70-plus dealers present. The proportion of early-bird entrants seems to be increasing with each show, as collectors pay a small premium to get their hands on the choice collectables before the regular showgoers gain admittance.

By my calculations - based on the numbers supplied by Guideline Publications - early birds now account for around a quarter of the total gate.

As usual, there was a great atmosphere in the BDC, with many traders offering collectors a seasonal mince pie or chocolate to enhance their enjoyment of the show.





The large-scale resin busts of a WWII British paratrooper and a Scots Guards Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) painted by Louise Handley of Loggerheads Military Studios

→ New blood

Along with the nucleus of traders that has formed the backbone of the London shows for as long as I can remember, there were some new faces at the event, including Loggerheads Military Studios.

Specialising in the painting of larger scale military figures and busts, Loggerheads showcases the artistic talents of proprietor, Louise Handley, who has been painting resin and metal cast figurines for 25 years.



Loggerheads Military Studios painted 100mm metal Scots Guards RSM



Among the items on offer, and photographed for this report, were large-scale resin busts of a WWII British paratrooper and a Scots Guards Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) complete with bearskin. Beautifully painted and of a substantial size, these would both make awesome display pieces in the right setting and in my view, were very competitively priced at £90.

Louise had also painted a full-bodied figure of a Scots Guards RSM in 100mm metal - another terrific piece - in addition to a Napoleonic-era British Line Infantry drummer, both of which were priced at £75.

Another bust - a superbly painted Zulu War-era trooper of the 24th Foot - was snapped up at the show. Resplendent in red tunic, pith helmet and bushy brown moustache, it proved irresistible to a discerning collector.

Indeed, there was a lot of collector interest in the Loggerheads tables and I expect we'll be seeing much more of Louise Handley's handiwork at the 2016 shows.

Simply Ace

Another company that provides first-class painted figures at a very reasonable cost is Manchester-based Ace Miniatures.

Owned and operated by George Johnson, Ace supplies



high-quality castings manufactured in Russia, as well as expertly painted versions of the figures executed by a Russian studio.

The examples photographed for this report include a superb 54mm Italian knight bearing the standard of Venice and a 16th century European King reclining in his ornate, wood-carved throne with a hunting dog at his feet.

The castings for both of these models were supplied by EK Castings and are terrific. Add a top-notch Russian paint job and they are simply stunning, and amazing value for money, too. The painted nobleman was on sale for £110 and the standard bearer for £120, recognising the additional detailed paintwork on the standard.

Tale of two chariots

The next two items that caught my eye were both chariots from ancient times: one made by a minor UK manufacturer and the other by a German toy-making giant.

The first product was a boxed example of Taylor and Barrett set 811 produced in the 1950s. A light, two-horse racing Roman chariot rather than a vehicle built for warfare, the British-made set was gloss-finished and clearly intended as a toy, rather than a collectable miniature. This terrific little set was on sale with Hertfordshire-based dealer, Steve Viccars, for £165.

The second chariot appeared on the tables of vintage figure dealer, Adrian Little. This piece was produced in

around 1910 by Heyde in their No.2 scale. The vehicle and its three passengers are part of a massive Roman processional set entitled *The Triumph of Germanicus*, which depicts the return of the conquering general to the city state.

The full original set included a number of chariots, horsemen, marching warriors, musicians and even a mighty African elephant!

The items on sale with Adrian were showing some signs of their 100-plus years in existence, but were highly collectable pieces, nonetheless. He was offering the chariot with its standard-bearing passengers as well as a foot-figure guiding the two rearing white and grey horses for £275. In addition, he was offering one of the imperial trumpeters from the main set for £40.

Coronation figure

In addition to the Taylor and Barrett chariot, Steve Viccars had on offer a rare item from small-scale British manufacturer, Phillip Segal.

The drum major from the band of the Household Cavalry was apparently part of a set produced by Segal in celebration of the Coronation of Elizabeth II in 1953. The figure was on sale for £35.

Spanish manufacturer Alymer has made a much-welcomed return to the London shows and sells

Ace Miniatures 54mm Italian knight standard bearer



Part of Heyde's set *The Triumph of Germanicus* which dealer Adrian Little was offering for sale





Alymer's French Foreign Legion set attracted a lot of interest at the show

classic and brand new castings and highly attractive gloss-painted sets.

For this report, we photographed a French Foreign Legion (FFL) unit marching with two pack mules. The set includes an officer and seven riflemen in addition to the animals. This would make a pleasing addition to an existing FFL collection, representing as it does the logistical supply chains that are critical to any military operation.

The ten figures are packaged in a classic hand-made box and retail for what I think is a very reasonable €200.

Resin Jack Tar

From gloss-painted metal to a highly realistic mini-diorama by Steve Dixon based on a resin kit produced by Tommy's War.



Trader, Steve Viccars, was selling this drum major from the band of the Household Cavalry by lesser-known British maker Phillip Segal



Taylor and Barrett set 811 featuring a light, two-horse racing Roman chariot was available at the show from dealer Steve Viccars



K&C's tinplate Hong Kong tram car was certainly something a little different!



Steve Dixon's impressive little vignette garnered plenty of interest on the day

→ The centrepiece is a Royal Navy rating in 1914 uniform which has been beautifully sculpted by Nino Pizzichemi.

The figure has a Lee Enfield rifle slung over his shoulder and is enjoying a smoke - a Players Navy Cut, perhaps? Toy soldier artisan Steve had taken the figure and built a small diorama around it that included a fence, a naval kitbag and a tin helmet.

The end result is the vignette of a WWI serviceman who looks like he's about to be picked up and taken to the docks to rejoin his warship. Another great offering from Steve, that was priced at £49.

Hong Kong tram

As usual the King and Country (K&C) tables were buzzing with collectors and among the eye-catching items on offer was a 1:30 scale tin plate tram car from the popular The Streets of old Hong Kong series.

Authentically painted to represent the No. 88 tram which served stops between Shau Kei Wan and Kennedy Town, the model is a real throwback to the tin plate toys of the past, but fits perfectly with the rest of the series. The tram car retails at around £100.



The brand new Swiss Guard masters which Andy Neilson, co-founder of King & Country, previewed at the show

Papal Guard

Hong Kong-based K&C head honcho, Andy Neilson, was in town for the London show and I heard his laughter over the crowds as he discussed the company's impending releases with a group of collectors.

On learning that I was writing a report on the show for *Toy Soldier Collector*, he offered me a seasonal scoop! Andy emerged from behind the company's tables with some exquisite masters for a forthcoming release: the Swiss Guards that protect the Pope in the Vatican City.

For some 500 years, a small army of volunteer soldiers from Switzerland has guarded the Vatican. Although the unit still dresses in 16th century-style military uniforms, don't be fooled by its antiquated attire: the Swiss Guard is reputed to be one of the world's most elite, highly trained regiments.

The figures Andy let us photograph for the report included an officer, a bugler and two pikemen. It's not difficult to imagine how stunning these amazing sculpts will look when given the full K&C paint treatment. The vivid blue and yellow/orange of the Swiss Guard uniform will really bring these figures to life.

In closing

I enjoyed the final London show of the year and took the opportunity to buy a couple of small gifts for collector friends before leaving.


Reg Auckland of organisers Guideline Publications said visitor numbers were a little down on the December 2014 show and some last-minute cancellations had reduced the number of trader tables by around 20.

Nevertheless, he was pleased to confirm that dealer book-

ings for the 2016 shows were "steady and on a par with previous years."

At the request of dealers and customers alike, the first show of 2016 will take place on Saturday April 2, 2016 at the BDC. This is in response to observations that the March show came too soon on the heels of the December events.

The mid-year show in June and the end of year show in December will continue as in previous years.

We wish all our readers a happy collecting year in 2016 and look forward to seeing you at the London events. 

Text by George Phillips. Photography by TSC



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Fantastic Plastics

Mike Blake reviews all the latest and greatest plastic figures to be released into the hobby for collectors

Engineer Basevich

Set No 14 Yugoslav Partisans 1941-45

The civil war that raged in Yugoslavia following the German invasion in 1941 was bloody, brutal and complex, with royalists, fascists, communists, ethnic groups and the Axis powers fighting against each other. When the Germans overran Yugoslavia in April 1941, the first Yugoslav resistance movement to be formed were the royalist/nationalist Serb 'Chetnik Detachments of the Yugoslav Army' (later 'Yugoslav Army

in the Homeland'). They were shortly followed by Josip Broz Tito's Communist Partisans.

Initially cooperating by late 1941, they began fighting each other in an attempt to ensure control of post-war Yugoslavia. According to some sources, both sides established an arrangement with the Axis powers to allow them to attack other partisans. Despite this, the partisan forces' activities prompted numerous anti-partisan operations by the Wehrmacht in the Balkans.

Once more, EB have produced figures that are unusual and well sculpted, with plenty of character. They are in pale buff plastic and there are 12 figures in 12 poses. I must confess, I don't know which figures belong to which group, except that logic suggests that the ones that look most like each other go together. Nevertheless, I shall not try to allocate





to either group, just describe the figures in the whole set (many of which seem to have been based on a photo of a rather more slender me!).

One of my favourites is a figure in a very determined standing pose aiming a revolver, with full beard and long hair, wearing a fur cap and Italian-style Alpine clothing. Similarly hirsute and clothed are four more figures; one fires a German MMG from the hip, another prepares to lob a stick grenade, the third stands rather nonchalantly with one hand in his trouser pocket, and the last is armed with a large knife, wearing a knitted hat with a fold-over end and tassel which makes him look like a rather menacing Father Christmas!

In contrast, there are two female resistance fighters both firing rifles; one is stood, the other

knelt, and they are dressed similarly in jacket and trousers.

Of the remaining figures, some are clothed like the first group, whilst others are dressed more like the women. Two are armed with automatic pistols; one kneels firing with the gun held in both hands, whilst the other rushes forward leading a charge, both arms raised. The final two are another MMG gunner and the only figure armed with a SMG, both of whom are firing their weapons from the hip.



“One of my favourites is a figure in a very determined standing pose aiming a revolver, with full beard and long hair...”

EB keep doing it. Here is yet another 'First In Plastic' award for them, Chetniks and Tito Communists!

CONTACT

Engineer Basevich

Email: solafan2010@mail.ru.

In the UK:

Steve Weston Toy Soldiers

14 Limburg Road

Canvey Island

Essex

SS8 0QJ

Tel: 01268 680117

www.plasticsoldiers.co.uk

LOD Enterprises

The War At Troy



Suddenly, it is the Ancient Period which is getting all the attention! I mentioned this new US-based company's first set in the previous issue in the Plastic News section. LOD Enterprises is a manufacturer and distributor of plastic collectible toy soldiers based in Green Bay, WI, started in 2014 by Ken Ciak, its 'managing member'. Their stated objective is to 'create collectible plastic soldiers today with a nod to the past... drawing on the rich history of plastic soldiers and playsets to create new figure sets for the collector's market'. Ken wants collectors to have both a feeling of nostalgia and an appreciation of historically accurate detail when they receive figures from LOD.

The first LOD plastic figures are of Trojan and Greek infantry from the War at Troy. According to Greek myth, the Trojan War was fought between the Trojans and the Achaeans (Greeks) when Paris of Troy took Helen from

her husband Menelaus, King of Sparta. Agamemnon, King of Mycenae and Menelaus's brother, led an Achaean expedition to Troy and besieged the city for ten years. After the deaths of many heroes, including the Achaeans Achilles and Ajax, and the Trojans Hector and Paris, the city fell to the ruse of the 'Trojan Horse'.

The figures come in header-card and clear plastic bag packaging, 1:30 scale i.e. 60mm tall, in a soft-hard plastic, compatible with Conte, TSSD and Expeditionary Force. Each set is of 16 figures, eight Greeks in four poses in cream plastic and eight Trojans in four poses in blue. They are all in combat

poses, each side with one archer. From the look of the photos on the LOD website, the figures were computer-designed and have a smoothness of limb and clothing associated with that method.

The Trojan poses are a standing archer, one advancing with round-with-side-cut-outs shield and sword, one advancing with figure-of-eight shield and spear, and one in a horned helmet and round shield with spear ready to throw. The Greeks are advancing with spear and round shield, fighting with sword and rectangular shield, about to throw spear with round shield-with-side-cut-outs and a kneeling archer. These last two are especially

well done poses, the figures dynamically capturing the energy involved. All the shields are engraved, making the design easier to paint but harder to change.

I am sure we all wish Ken well with this new venture. It is always good to welcome a new maker to the hobby. He has plans for more sets related to the Trojan Wars, including cavalry and chariots.

CONTACT

LOD Enterprises
3081 Kingswood Court
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USA
Tel: +1 920 471 7349
www.lodtoysoldiers.com

In the UK:
Steve Weston Toy Soldiers
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Paragon Scenics & Miniatures

The Blue & The Gray ACW Infantry

Paragon's latest set is of twelve 1:32 scale (actually more 1:30, i.e. at the bigger end of the scale) ACW figures in pale blue and grey plastic, suitable for recruitment to either side of the conflict. They have 'Swivel and Swappable (sic) Heads', with spares included so that they can wear either a kepi or a slouch hat. This is a neat idea which both adds variety and means that they can be made to fit in with existing ACW figures in your collection if you like all the headgear in units to match.

They all wear the same uniform of sack coat and trousers over the boots, and the same equipment of back pack with blanket roll on top, haversack, canteen, cartridge box, and bayonet scabbard. All are armed with rifle-muskets with fixed bayonets.

Poses are all very active; one has his rifle-musket up above his head as if wading across a stream or defending himself from a cavalryman, one has his weapon horizontal at chest height in a defensive pose as if warding off a sword slash, the third is running and lunging with fixed bayonet, and the final figure is running forward with rifle-musket at face height.

The ACW is a period already very well supported with figures, and in a way it is a little disappointing to see Paragon go down the route of adding to them. Their previous releases have been so much more exciting, with some of the best Old West figures around, and I for one am pleased to see that they will return to that theme with future releases (see Plastic News).



CONTACT

Paragon Scenics
Tel: +1 707 536 9801
www.paragon-scenics.com

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Priceless Asset



Munitionette

A cottage industry in the true sense of the word, Asset Miniatures has been serving a niche segment of the toy soldier and model figure market for more than two decades. **George Phillips** spoke to co-owner, **Anne Randall**, to find out more about the past, present and future of the company

The Asset Miniatures story has a familiar beginning. Co-proprietor, Colin Randall, started collecting model soldiers in the 1960s and his wife, Anne, was swept along with the hobby, surrendering several walls in their dining room to display cabinets that could accommodate a growing collection. While not a collector herself, Anne was always sympathetic to her husband's hobby, which was soon to become a family business venture.

"Colin and I launched Asset Miniatures just over

20 years ago, operating from a shed at the bottom of our garden," Anne explains. "We commissioned the sculpting of our masters and carried out every other step in the production process, from moulding, trimming and assembling to painting and varnishing."

All painted Asset figures have a high gloss finish.

"We originally traded through David Bracey and Lancer, but began to trade solely under the Asset brand in 1996. The brand name was created by reversing the initials of our youngest

daughter, Tessa, who is now 32."

Asset is a purely family-run cottage industry business

and in addition to the bulging garden shed, the operation has spilled over into the dining room of the family home in Middlesex.

"All three of my children and now two out of three of my grandchildren have been raised in the presence of these miniature men, women and various creatures and



Maritja telling a fortune





Scots Guards Pipes and Drums

buildings," Anne says.

"They have been brought up to wield a paintbrush or a can of grey undercoat spray paint, if required. Colin casts and trims the models, I clean them and it's a joint effort to paint, varnish and finish them.

"As I am not particularly confident with computers and working online, my son, Mark, and both my daughters, Susan and Tessa, have typed and printed invoices, catalogues and painting

instructions.

"They have all been dragged – sometimes kicking and screaming – to shows in various parts of the country, mainly in London. Thankfully, they have been able to take time off work and find childcare, so they could come along and help set up tables and answer questions about our different ranges."

Business ethos

Anne pauses for a moment when asked to encapsulate the business ethos of Asset Miniatures in a few words.

"I know it sounds a bit corny, but we truly are a company in which enthusiasts produce models for other enthusiasts. We wouldn't produce and sell anything that wasn't up to standard, and that we wouldn't be prepared to spend money

on ourselves."

With the sad passing of British sculptor, Alan Caton, in November 2015, Anne and Colin lost a friend and creative collaborator.

"Alan has sculpted all of our master models. He was the best in the business and he will be sorely missed," Anne says.

The Asset product range initially included present-day soldiers but has evolved to include those from 1880-1914, Dominion and Colonial troops from the 1953 Royal Coronation, police and fire services, City of London ceremonial figures, WWII Home Front, Victorian civilians and the 'Little Modling' range, that depicts rural English life around 1900 and is based on the diary of the fictional village girl, Daisy Potts.

Best sellers

One of the best-selling lines for Asset at the moment is the WWII Home Front series.

"The Home Front would have been seen very much from a woman's perspective at the time, as most of the



Royal West African Frontier Force c1953



London Irish Pipes and Drums, present day



→ men had been called away to war," Anne says.

"The range is complete with Anderson shelters, digging for victory figures - complete with vegetables - and VE Day conga line. Our 1953 Coronation figures are also very popular.

"The sets of which I'm proudest include our City of London Ceremonial figures, as not many have been produced in such detail before. Likewise, with our Coronation figures, a very valued customer and friend of ours has made it his life's work to discover and document all there is to know about the subject and has kindly passed his knowledge onto us."

Sales channels

Asset's customer base is located in the UK, USA, Canada, Australia and a number of European countries. Most are served by an international mail order service, but the company also maintains a presence at the London Toy Soldier shows.

"We attended all the shows at The Royal National Hotel in Russell Square, and had a good relationship with the organisers there. Following the show's move to The Business Design Centre in Islington, we have found the guidelines associated with setting up and the amount of time allocated to unload and park more challenging.

"Attendance is not yet

'The Tin Man' at his work bench



the same as at the Royal National shows and my takings reflect this. So in 2015, we only traded at the June and December shows. In my view, it would be better if the shows were scaled down to just two a year."

Moving forward

As a small company, Asset has the ability to respond to new trends and influences and to adapt to current events and world news.

"It's often down to the smaller companies like us to commission specialist, sometimes limited edition, ranges to mark or commemorate notable occasions or events," Anne says.

When asked what it's like running an 'end-to-end' model figure business like Asset, Anne offered an unembroidered account.

"It's hard work and often very challenging. When you have to make moulds, make the castings, fix, paint and varnish the castings, then package, box and market them and advertise online and at shows, it is a big undertaking, and show days

World War II Victory in Europe Street Party Set



Aye Aye Conga!

Few – if any – model figure manufacturers can offer such a fascinating insight into British military and social life over the past couple of centuries.

Figures representing the celebrations that occurred in the UK after the end of the Second World War in Europe are a particularly charming element of the Assets Miniatures catalogue. My personal favourite is the VE Day Conga Line, in which uniformed servicemen and women, and civilians dance a celebratory Conga. A novelty dance derived from the Cuban carnival dance of the same name, the Conga was popular in the US and UK from the 1930s to the 1950s. Dancers formed a long, processing line, which would snake around the dance floor and sometimes form a circle.

Asset offers Army, Navy and Air Force figures, along with civilian women in its Conga Line range. Variations such as uniforms representing different ranks and differing heads and colour schemes enable collectors to build a pretty impressive Conga line of their own.

Interestingly, the Asset V.E. Day Conga Line range graced the cover of Issue Four of this magazine, published more than 10 years ago! We liked the set then, we still like it now!



Farmer leaning on gate



Karl and his Dancing Bear, Norbert

are often long and tiring.

"In addition, I know I can spend far too long on the fine grain detail on some figures but I know the quality that my customers have come to expect will be there."

Future imperfect?

In Anne's opinion, the collectable toy soldier industry will continue to grow, but she feels the hobby itself is shrinking as a large proportion of younger people are not interested in the products and ranges on offer.

"This is in no way a criticism of them as they are growing up in a culture that presents many other interests and pastimes," she said. "But I do think that if they are exposed to the hobby at a very young age, they will hold fond memo-

It's often down to the smaller companies like us to commission specialist, sometimes limited edition ranges to mark or commemorate notable occasions or events




Women's Royal Air Force WWI

Victorian
Fisherman



→ ries of it. The hope would then be that they return to the hobby at an older age, with a sense of nostalgia and fondness.

"Speaking for Asset, we will carry on with the company for as long as we are able to. However, I know the day will come when the business will have to be mothballed, as my three children are uninterested in carrying on with it. I think they may have had enough of being surrounded by tiny figures, the smell of paint and boxes scattered everywhere!" 

CONTACT

Asset Miniatures

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Show dates

Details of the shows happening in your area

March

Sunday 6th March

The 27th Annual West Coaster Toy Soldier Show, Irvine Marriott Hotel/Orange County Airport, 18000 Von Karman Ave., Irvine, CA 92612, USA. Doors open at 9am and close at 3pm. Admission: \$6, under 12s free. Room trading also taking place on the Friday and Saturday. Organisers: The West Coaster, tel: (760) 758 5481 or visit: www.thewestcoaster.com.

April

Saturday 2nd April

The Toy Soldier Show London (Presented by Guideline Publications and Toy Soldier Collector magazine), The Islington Business Design Centre, 52 Upper Street, London, N1 0QH, England. Doors open at 10.30am and close at 4pm. Admission: Early bird (9.30am onwards) £10, general admission (10.30am onwards) £6 (£5 for prepaid tickets which can be ordered by phone or mail from the Guideline office), children under 14 FREE. Organiser: Guideline Publications/Toy Soldier Collector magazine (www.toysoldiercollector.com and www.thetoyshow.com), tel: 01908 274433. (TSC)

Saturday 23rd April

The British Model Soldier Society Annual Show 2016, Church Hall, St. Saviours', St. George's Square, Lupus Street, Pimlico SW1V 3QW. Doors open at 10.30 for the general public and 10.00 for BMSS Members. Admission: £6 non-BMSS members and £5 BMSS members. Child admission is free, but must be accompanied by an adult. Organiser: The BMSS, www.bmssonline.com.

May

Friday 20th & Saturday 21st May

75th Miniature Figure Collectors of America Show, Valley Forge Convention Center, 1160 First Avenue, King of Prussia, PA 19406, USA. Doors open at midday Friday and 9am Saturday and close at 5pm Friday and 4pm Saturday. Admission: \$TBC. Organiser: MFCA, www.mfcashow.com.

Saturday 28th & Sunday 29th May

The 10th Annual Texas Toy Soldier Show, The Menger Hotel, San Antonio, Texas, USA. Doors open at 10am Saturday and 11am Sunday and close at 5pm Saturday and 3pm Sunday. Admission: \$5. Organiser: Kings X Toy Soldiers, Tel: +1 210 226 7000. www.kingsx.com.

June

Saturday 4th June

The Toy Soldier Show London (Presented by Guideline Publications and Toy Soldier Collector magazine), The Islington Business Design Centre, 52 Upper Street, London, N1 0QH, England. Doors open at 10.30am and close at 4pm. Admission: Early bird (9.30am onwards) £10, general admission (10.30am onwards) £6 (£5 for prepaid tickets which can be ordered by phone or mail from the Guideline office), children under 14 FREE. Organiser: Guideline Publications/Toy Soldier Collector magazine (www.toysoldiercollector.com and www.thetoyshow.com), tel: 01908 274433. (TSC)

If you organise a show, or know of one other collectors would be interested in, then please either post us the details or email: tsceditor@darkmedialtd.com. Information we require is the date of the event, full address of where it will be held, admission times, ticket prices and all relevant organiser info, including contact telephone number.

All shows listed which are followed by (TSC) means the magazine will have a table at these events. TSC editors or contributors may be in attendance at other shows, but the magazine may not have a table.

HISTORICAL MINIATURES FOR COLLECTORS

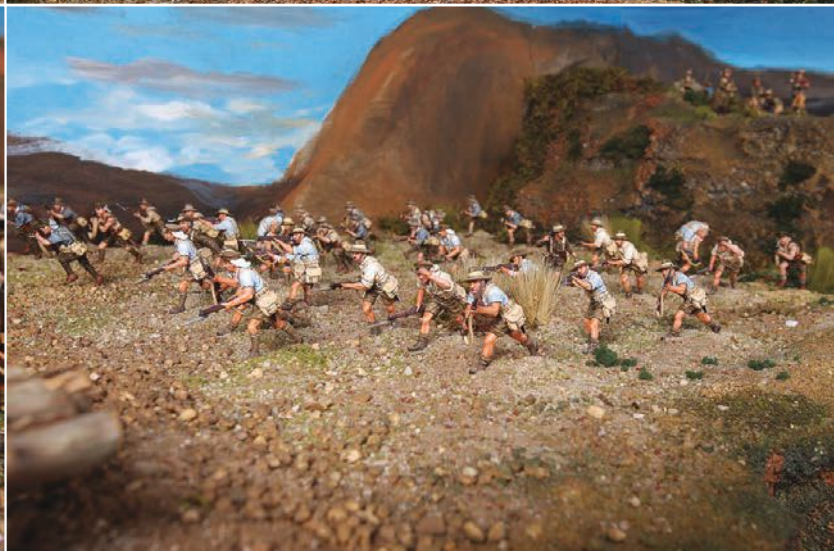
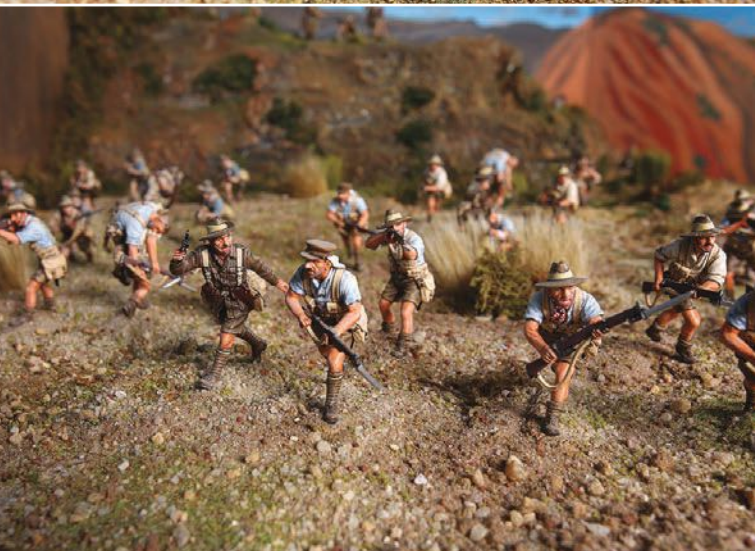


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Some Corner of a Foreign Field

Dr Martin Kerby gives us an overview of the new exhibition in Brisbane which features a lot of toy soldiers!

The seventh Brisbane King and Country Collectors dinner and the second one to be held at St Joseph's Nudgee College, could hardly have occurred in a year richer with diorama possibilities. The 600th anniversary of Agincourt, the 200th anniversary of Waterloo, the centenary of the Gallipoli campaign and the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Britain are all worthy



This page: The 'One Day in June' diorama

Opposite page: The 'Anzac and Empire' diorama

of the serious attention of manufacturers, collectors and diorama makers. For those who know their history, it is also the 800th anniversary of the signing of Magna Carta, the most iconic legal document in history. The diorama

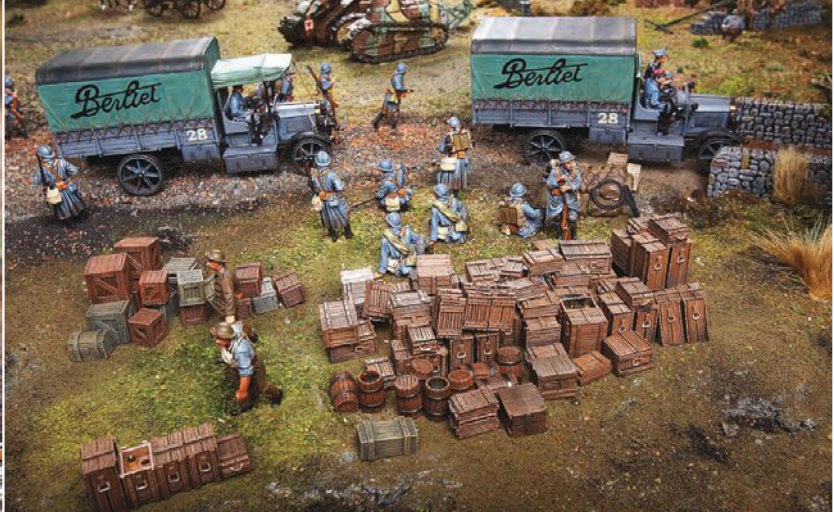
options were seemingly limited only by the availability of figures and the need to ensure a relevance to the college community.

This year's exhibition is, if anything, more ambitious than the one which met with considerable critical and popular acclaim in 2014. A group of Brisbane collectors and diorama makers have created an exhibition spread across six tables on two floors of a heritage listed building,

covering an area a touch under 40 square metres. They have used over 1000 figures and two dozen vehicles and aircraft to recreate the drama and the tragic spectacle of some of the greatest battles in history.

The upstairs dioramas, collectively titled One Day in June, recreate a rain soaked field just outside Brussels in June 1815, in what was then the United Kingdom of the Netherlands on which

Napoleon Bonaparte was defeated by an Allied army led by the Duke of Wellington. In one display using over 300 King and Country figures, various events of the day are compressed into a staggering array that recreates the colour and spectacle of this momentous battle. On two other tables, the diorama makers have used figures from John Jenkins, King and Country and Thomas Gunn to depict the dogged defence →



→ of Hougoment and the arrival of the Prussians.

In this centenary year, it would be inconceivable to ignore 1915 as a seminal moment in Australian history. Gallipoli was a sideshow to the main battles in France and Belgium, was indisputably a failure and offers little more to the historian than a story of heroism, suffering and missed opportunities. Yet it has transcended those awkward details and has

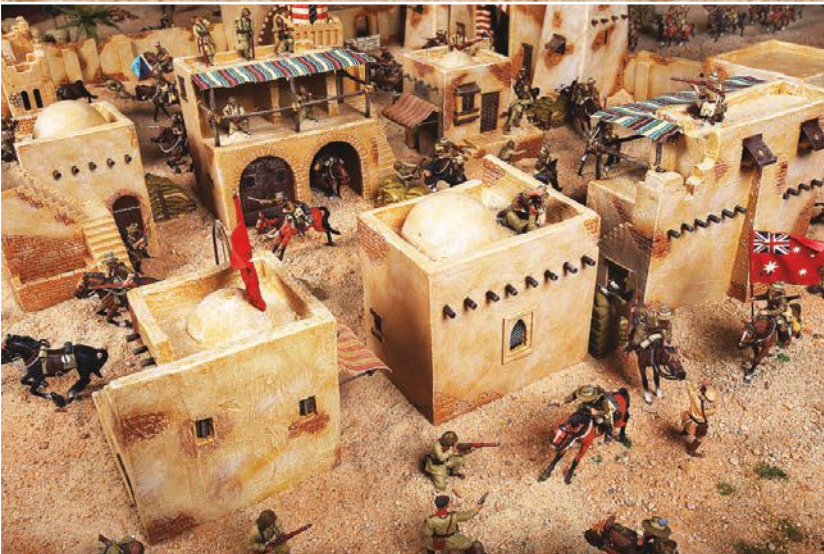
comfortably outlived the Empire in whose name the sacrifices were made. Anzac and Empire recreates the vicious fighting of August 6, 1915 at Lone Pine. Making use of recent releases from King and Country and John Jenkins Designs, this diorama shows a portion of the attack on the Turkish trenches by the 1st Brigade AIF and the arrival of reinforcements on the beachhead established on April 25.

Although Gallipoli does

indeed cast a giant shadow, it was on the Western Front that the armies of the Empire suffered the most. By the onset of winter 1914, the stalemate was complete. The trench system it spawned would remain relatively static until the spring of 1918. It stretched southward from the North Sea coast of Belgium, with a bulge outwards to contain the much-contested Ypres salient, through France in front of towns such as Soissons,

Above: 'The Final Hundred Days' diorama

Reims, Verdun, St. Mihiel and Nancy, reaching its southernmost point in Alsace, at the Swiss border. In the course of four years, the combatants would dig a staggering 40,000 kilometres of trenches and would defend or attack them at the cost of 13.5 million casualties. The diorama makers have sought to show some of the complexity as well as the



Above: 'The Charge at Beersheba' diorama

horror of the Western Front in *The Final Hundred Days* by extending their vision beyond the trenches to the vast effort made to supply an army of such size. Making use of figures from W. Britain, John Jenkins Designs and the ubiquitous King and Country, this ten square metre diorama offers a poignant study of the experience of the frontline

soldier circa 1918 and of the expenditure of the human and material wealth of the Empire and her allies.

The final diorama, *The Charge at Beersheba*, recreates the famous mounted charge of the 4th Light Horse Brigade on October 31 1917, which was part of the wider British offensive collectively known as the third Battle of Gaza. Commencing at dusk, members of the brigade stormed through the Turkish

defences and seized the strategic town of Beersheba. The capture of the town enabled British Empire forces to break the Ottoman line near Gaza on November 7 and advance into Palestine. Again, making use of King and Country's marvellous Light Horse range, the diorama shifts the focus to the moments after the town's defences were breached.

The World War One dioramas were funded by a Queensland Government An-

zac Centenary Grant and an Australian Government Arts and Culture Grant. They will be one of the centrepieces of a major exhibition in October culminating in a sound and light show on the front lawn of the college. Once again, the Brisbane collectors extend their sincere thanks to Andy Neilson, John Jenkins and Brett and Gerelou Williams of The Military Workshop. [www](#)

Photography by Marc Robertson

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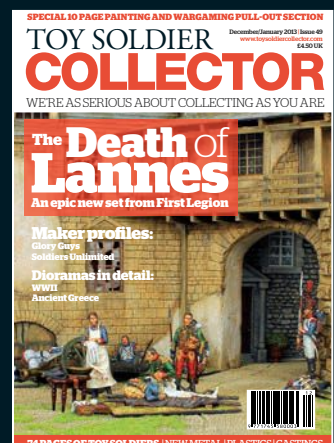
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New Releases 2

Reviews of new metal figures to arrive in the hobby
by **George Phillips** and **Mark Avery**

W. Britain

Vikings & WWI

W. Britain is one company that I would say often 'plays it safe' with its releases, particularly over the last decade since new owners, First Gear, took over. Now, don't get me wrong, it has made some bolder moves, like being the first larger producer to launch a matte WWI range, however, with the 100th anniversary approaching at the time, this wasn't so much daring as more a sensible business move. Being the oldest name in toy soldiers, with no doubt one of the largest collector

bases, means you need to cater to the masses unlike the smaller manufacturers who can make more niche products and still see a return. I was, therefore, quite pleasantly surprised to see Vikings making an appearance in the 2015 Fall (that's Autumn to us UK folks) catalogue, and to now see three Saxons being shown in the 2015 Winter catalogue clearly means WB sees this as a serious new range.

To be honest, knowing that the driving force behind

WB these days is Ken Osen, well-known sculptor and military historian, it shouldn't have been that much of a surprise. After all, I know Ken did a range of Saxons and Vikings around 15 years ago for another company. I'm pleased to report though, that after seeing the first eight figures as well as the next three pre-production masters at the December show in London, they look as good as I would have hoped (for reference, the images you see here are those figures we shot images of at the show).

Poses of the figures are well animated without being excessive - a personal 'bug bear' of mine is when companies in the past would

cover an older/ancient period and really go too far with the poses and quest for action, often making the figures verge on the fantasy arena. Anyway, I'm pleased to say that these poses work and give enough feeling of action without the need to head off down the fantasy/blood thirsty road. Painting is subtle, but it works. Admittedly, the standard of painting is, dare I say, a little less detailed than some of the other producers using the factories in China, but again, WB knows its target market and keeping the painting a little more simplified means it can keep its prices down to a slightly lower level. For example, these figures all retail for around \$36 (for UK



The 11 new figures from the 'Wrath of the Northmen' range, including 8 Vikings and 3 Saxons

Set 23109 'Queen of the battlefield' 196-18 British Vickers gun and crew (with accessories)



pricing, check with your local WB stockist).

Personally, I'm excited to see WB taking the leap into this period of history. It's clearly one Ken has a great interest in, which I'm sure, in time, will be reflected in the breadth of the range - that is, so long as plenty of you choose to add these first 11 figures to your collection!

Earlier, I mentioned that one thing WB did do a few years ago (nearly ten to be more precise) was to be the first of the 'big boys' to launch

a matte WWI range, and that range continues to grow and develop as we ended 2015 and head into 2016. Again, at the December show, Katie Hines, the lady that now runs the WB Collectors Club in the UK, came to see us and show us two new WWI pre-production sets, both of which are limited editions (by the time you're reading this, hopefully the actual sets will be on sale).

The first set is titled, 'Queen of the battlefield' and features a British Vickers machine gun and two-man crew along with a scenic base (partial dug out with sandbags) as well as a few accessories. The set is limited to only 500 pieces worldwide and is really well produced (this is my favourite of all the new releases). I know WB has done machine gun crews for WWI before (from memory, one of the first sets they did for the matte WWI range was a gun and two-man crew), but I think the addition of the scenic base and accessories really helps life this particular set, plus for lazy collectors like me, it makes building a decent diorama display very easy indeed! Priced at around

\$135, it is again good value for money given the level of detail and what you get 'in the box' for your money.

The final new release is the US mortar crew with French Crapouillot or 'Little Toad'. I'll be the first to admit, I'm no expert of WWI artillery pieces and had honestly never heard of this particular weapon, so if nothing

else, it got my interest and made me want to learn a little more. This is an interesting, if a little odd looking, set which I'm sure any of you collecting the WWI range will find useful. Again, poses are good, and as you would expect, the painting is neat, tidy and subtle, and with a price tag of \$100 for what is a 450-piece limited edition it is, again, good value for money.

Review by Mark Avery

Set 23108 1917-18 US mortar crew with French Crapouillot or 'Little Toad'



CONTACT

W. Britain/First Gear Inc.

PO Box 52

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USA

Tel: +1 563 690 1259

www.wbritain.com

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Unit 18 Moat Way

Barwell

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LE9 8EY

Tel: 01455 841756

www.bachmann.co.uk



Empire Military Miniatures

WWI and Colonials

Malcolm Watson of Empire Military Miniatures has been busy reinforcing the ranks of his existing WWI and Colonial figure ranges.

The first Empire British Expeditionary Force (BEF) releases have been boosted by three dynamic new poses which greatly strengthen the variety and diorama-building potential of the range.

The first is a kneeling Sergeant (yes, this is the authentic spelling for 1914!), whose uniform features period-authentic stripes. This is a career soldier with grey hair and moustache who, according to Malcolm, has "a very animated face."

Like all Empire figures, this

is part of a limited edition of 100 units, each of which is individually certificated. The new NCO retails at £37.50.



W1-1420 BEF Sgt No 1



W1-1421 BEF Carrying Ammo No 1

The second new figure is a private carrying an ammo box to bring much-needed ammunition to his unit.

The box is clearly marked as .303 ammunition - for both the Lee Enfield Rifles and Maxim machine guns of the BEF - and the word 'cordite' can clearly be seen on the label, such is the fine detail of the product.



ZW-2006 Lance Serjent loading



ZW-2004 Kneeling firing figure featuring one good conduct stripe

As such, the figure can be spliced very easily into scenic pieces, with the machine gunners and rifleman. This figure also retails at £37.50.

The first proper two-piece set in the BEF range is entitled, 'The Rescue' and features a private helping his injured lance corporal to his feet. There's a nice touch of animation and drama to this two-man piece, which retails at £75.

The first of the new batch of Zulu War figures is a soldier kneeling and tracking the movement of a target before coming onto the aim and bringing him down with a mighty .577 lead slug.

A bushy moustache and set of 'mutton chops' give this figure the appearance of an experienced campaigner.

The second figure is another white-haired warrior who is 'Kneeling at the Ready' and would make a great addition to a 'firing by the ranks' display.

He is joined by a Lance Serjent who is scanning the battlefield for his next target while loading a round into his Martini Henry.

The final new figure is a younger-looking private who is in the process of reloading his rifle while in a classic kneeling position. The young rifleman's hand is reaching into the white ammo pouch of his 1871



ZW-2007 Private kneeling loading



ZW-2005 Kneeling at the ready

“A bushy moustache and set of ‘mutton chops’ give this figure the appearance of an experienced campaigner.”

pattern Valise webbing. Malcolm reckons this figure “has his intent written on his face”, as he seeks to make every round count.

The first two figures in this review will be released in February 2016 and the second two in March. All of the figures will retail at £37.50 and are part of limited sets of 100 units that are individually certificated.

Review by George Phillips



W1-1423 'The Rescue'

CONTACT

Empire Military Miniatures
Venture House
4 Harland Close
Cosby
Leicestershire
LE9 1UQ
www.empiremm.co.uk
Tel: 07740 407983

John Jenkins Designs

WWI

It's always a pleasure to review new items from John Jenkins Designs and the latest crop of releases includes some solid additions to the company's WWI ranges.

First up is a crashed German Fokker Eindecker mono-plane fighter from the Knights of the Sky series. Armed with an MG14 machine gun that was synchronised to fire through the aircraft's propeller blades, the Eindecker proved a lethal warbird.

But the new model from JJD depicts an aircraft that has come off worse after an encounter with an allied aircraft. It rests nose-down, riddled with bullets, with a

partially collapsed wing and a busted prop.

For the scale aircraft enthusiast, this new piece offers the scope for 'storytelling' in the display of a collection and is an unusual addition to the Knights of the Sky range. The aircraft and base retail for £200 from Grey Goose Collectables.

To accompany the aircraft is a terrific little two-figure vignette representing an injured flyer being helped from the crash site by a uniformed comrade. The set includes nice little details, such as the supporting figure carrying the airman's leather flying hat for him. The pilot's white tasselled scarf is also nicely executed. The two figures retail at £68.



Capt W. E. Johns £30

From the Knights of the Sky to the land iron-clads and the release of a new WWI German armoured vehicle.

JJD's version of the A7V tank is a highly realistic-looking version of the first and only type of German tank to have seen combat in the Great War.

Introduced in 1918, the A7V was powered by two Daimler four-cylinder petrol engines that delivered roughly 200 horsepower between them. The vehicle's top speed was around nine miles per hour



Crashed Fokker Eindecker
Price £200 and WWI Pilot
(and comrade) £68



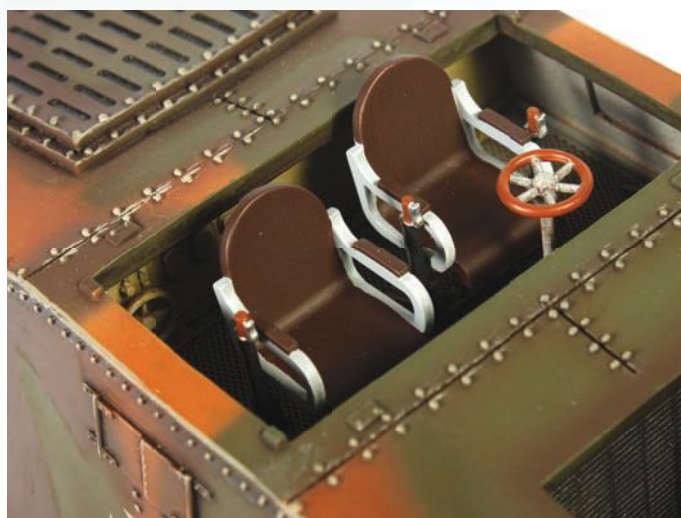
on roads and three miles per hour across country, none of which is surprising when considering the A7V was basically an armoured box - a moving fortress - on caterpillar tracks.

As such, the A7V packed some serious hardware in the form of a forward-mounted 57mm Maxium-Nordenfelt gun and no less than six 7.92 machine guns. Although it would only have crawled over the battlefields of Europe, the vehicle was literally bristling with weapons... and loaded with ammunition!

The tank carried up to sixty 200-round ammo belts for the machine guns and up to 300 rounds for the main armament.

The JJD version of the tank is a highly detailed version named Mephisto, that was captured by British and Australian troops in 1918. The real Mephisto now sits in a museum in Canberra, Australia, but the JJD version offers a great insight into what the vehicle would have looked like in combat.

Bearing the authentic German camouflage of the era and with its tracks caked in what looks very much like rust and the mud of the Western Front, this is an excellent new addition to the Great War range. The resin-based vehicle is available from Grey Goose Collectables in the UK and retails for £220.



The final item in this review is a highly animated depiction of Captain W.E. Johns, the WWI bomber pilot who also went on to pen the highly popular Biggles and Steeley series of novels that were published in the 1930s and 1940s.

The JJD model captures Johns during his years of service, running at full tilt for his aircraft and pulling on his heavily padded flying gloves as he goes.

This singular and highly collectable new piece retails for £30.

Review by George Phillips

A7V tank 'Mephisto' £220

CONTACT

John Jenkins Designs
Unit 6E, Tower 2
King Ley Industrial Building
33-35 Yip Kan Street
Wong Chuk Hang
Hong Kong
Tel: +852 9041 9065
www.johnjenkinsdesigns.com

In the UK:
Grey Goose Collectables
Sparrow Wycke Farm
Maldon Road
Mundon
Essex
CM9 6PB
Tel: 01621 743815
www.grey-goose.co.uk



Cold Steel Miniatures

Napoleonic Empress Dragoons



From left: Sapper, Officer, Standard Bearer, Bugler and Trooper of the Empress Dragoons

I bumped into British retailer, Centurion Toy Soldiers, and its owner, Iwan Williams, at the December show and Iwan was only too pleased to show me his latest Cold Steel Miniatures creations (for reference, CSM is a brand name for Iwan's own range of figures, which he has made in China and retails exclusively via his store in the UK, and via his US partner, Minutemen Toy Soldiers).

I've raved about CSM figures many times as I like the fact that a small retailer like Iwan has decided to

get some of his own figures made to suit what both he and his customers are looking for. Until now, the range has focused primarily on foot figures (bear in mind, Iwan only releases a few figures each year), but now he's making the move into mounted with the addition of the Empress Dragoons.

The figures are really striking and given that they are priced at £100 each, apart from the standard bearer who is £120, they are comparable to equivalent quality figures from some of the

much larger producers. Iwan said the figures 'should' be available in March/April and I think the reason he used the word 'should' in inverted commas was that he is now used to dealing with the Far East factories, where things don't always run to schedule. Personally, I'd be happy to wait as they look really good.

Great figures from a small but now fairly well established range. Well done Iwan, keep up the great work!

Review by Mark Avery

CONTACT

Centurion Toy Soldiers
6 Rufus Court
Chester
CH1 2JW
Tel: 01244 637 098
www.centuriontoysoldiers.co.uk

In the US:
Minuteman Toy Soldiers
35 Pilgrims Village Road
Unit #902
Taunton MA 02780
USA

www.mmtosoldiers.com
Tel: +1 617 462 5431



Indian Border Security Force camel band by Alymer in both casting (below) and painted form

Alymer Miniatures

Indian Border Security Force camel band

It was news coverage of President Obama's visit to India in January 2015 that introduced Antonio Marti of Alymer Miniatures to what is arguably the world's most unusual and colourful military band.

As the US president and his wife sheltered from persistent drizzle during the New Delhi Republic Day Parade, a vision in orange and red stepped purposefully into view.

Both VIP visitors were struck by the startling

appearance of the India Border Security Force's camel mounted band!

Completely taken by the band, Antonio was determined to produce his own version in 54mm to serve the needs of collectors with an eye for the unusual.

I was lucky enough to have the opportunity to view some elements of the 13-member band during December's London Toy Soldier Show.

These pieces are incredibly detailed; the uniforms of the musicians are vividly coloured and the decoration of the camels is very ornate. As we photographed a number of the camel-mounted figures in the lobby area of the Business Design Centre, a queueing collector yelled out to ask who the manufacturer was. They certainly attracted a lot of attention.

The full band is composed of five separate sets which

are supplied in classic hand-made boxes.

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- Set #5- Additional brass section including saxhorn, tuba and helicon priced at €255.

The pictures that accompany this report show the full set as castings before the paint is applied, in addition to some close-ups of the striking paintwork of the finished products.

Review by George Phillips



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WE'RE AS SERIOUS ABOUT COLLECTING AS YOU ARE

To restore or not to restore

Chris Bartlett shares his thoughts on how to restore old toy soldiers to their former glory

I started off acquiring (the best way to explain my very eclectic collection) toy soldiers as a child during the 1950's.

Along with playing with toy soldiers (and Dinky cars and military vehicles), the first Airfix construction kits appeared. My first attempts at building these kits were dreadful and many of the first models had to be patiently taken apart by my father, but together, we learnt the art of model making. My bedroom ceiling soon filled with dog fights between Sopwith Camels and Fokker Tri-Planes, along with Spitfires and Messersmitts.

However, I was brought up to look after what I had and can recall the occasional Dinky that had to be repainted and many that had to be washed in soapy water to get mud and dirt cleaned off after a war game amongst the flowerbeds in the back garden!

As a consequence of all this activity, when eventually I got into collecting old toy soldiers, I came across very many broken figures that I felt needed to be restored back to an acceptable standard, for display in my collection.

As my main concentration of collecting old toy soldiers is on hollow figures, my restoration methods are aimed at them.

The two examples shown in the photographs are of Timpo West Point Cadets at the present and a W. Britain Royal Horse Artillery out rider to accompany a gun team.

Timpo West Point Cadets

I first boiled the figure in 'hand wash' washing powder, such as Daz or Persil. This is very much a trial and error/suck it and see method, that could take fifteen minutes or half an hour! Once the figure(s) have been removed from the boiling water (please ensure you never leave the boiling pot!), wash the figure(s) in soapy water, then in clean, warm water. Most of the paint should have come off. Then dry the figure(s) thoroughly. I usually leave cleaned figure(s) upside down with the air hole unimpeded, on a nice, sunny window sill for a few days until I am 100% sure that the figure is dry. I then carefully wire brush the whole figure, using a suede brush or similar, to ensure all the paint has been removed and that all the surfaces are clean.

For parts that are missing, I buy spare parts from Dorset Soldiers, who have a very extensive range at very reasonable

prices. I then solder the parts to my figure and file off any excess solder and once the figure is ready for repainting, I again wash the figure in warm, soapy water to ensure no residue from the soldering flux is present. If this is not thoroughly cleaned, the acid/oil from the flux will react with the metal in later months or years. So a golden rule is always, 'preparation is everything'.

Once your figure has been repaired to your satisfaction, undercoat and repaint. I paint in matt acrylics, then put on a gloss clear varnish to finish off.


W. Britain Royal Horse Artillery Outrider

As can be seen from the photographs, a previous owner made holes in the body of the horse and used it as part of a team of six horses to pull a gun and limber. Also, this rider had his busby plume missing.

I did not strip all the paint off the whole figure as I wanted to retain the original paint on the rider, so I filed off the paint around the four holes in the horse and filed the base of the hat plume area so that I could solder a replacement hat plume and solder the holes in the horse's body.

Once the hat plume and holes were soldered and filed smooth, the figure was carefully washed and dried thoroughly, then repainted and glossed.

Restoring old figures gives me a great deal of personal pleasure and they do look good in my display. Restoring the figure does not, in my experience, improve its value, but I know which ones I would prefer to have in my collection.

If your modelling skills are not up to doing what I did, but you still wish to have some figures restored, you can contact Andrew Humphries at GBE Toy Soldiers and discuss with him what you would like to do. 



Restoration service for 'old toy soldiers'

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E-mail : sales@kingandcountry.com

KING & COUNTRY SHOP

245, Pacific Place, 88 Queensway,
Hong Kong
Tel : (852) 2525 8603
Website : www.kingandcountry.com

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